

How To Train Your Dragon: The Outcast Lands

by mrjop2

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Summary: This is book 2 of a planned trilogy. Hiccup and gang is shipwrecked on a strange Island known as the Outcast Lands. Here they must survive some dangerous new dragons, an evil witch, and a mad Viking with a grudge against Hiccup

1. Chapter 1

_A THANKS GOES OUT TO SOCCERSTAR7 FOR BETA READING THIS STORY FOR ME!

_

This is book 2 of my HTTYD series of fanfiction. This takes place after the events of my first story: Flight of the Shadow Lord. You really do not need to have read it to understand the events of this story.

****Chapter 1: Chaos in Berk****

"We're being attacked!"

Spitelout's warning echoed through the entire village. It was a warning that no one ever expected to hear again.

It had been nearly three seasons ago when Berk was last attacked by dragons; that was when Green Death, the dragon queen, controlled a giant flock of dragons to bring food back to her. Since the death of the dragon queen, they had made peace with these dragons, and with all those dragons in the village, hostile dragons usually didn't dare attack the village.

For whatever reason, two belligerent Timberjacks were attacking Berk with an abnormal aggression. All the dragons appeared afraid of them and were, or in the process of, hiding throughout the village. No one expected the dragons to behave so erratic, which further lulled the Vikings into a false sense of security.

There was already major damage done to the village before the first

Viking even had an ax in hand; the two dragons were brave enough that they didn't need to be near the other for protection, thus resulting in them causing the most damage possible. Neither dragon was interested in the livestock or any of their food supplies, which was surprising. It was as if these two dragons had a grudge against this village and wanted nothing more but to burn Berk to the ground.

"Prepare the catapults!" Stoick ordered, unable to shake the feeling that he had let his people down by this slow reaction to the attack. He was the Viking chief of this village and was well respected among the Vikings. He had led them into many victorious battles against terrifying dragons, and even some against the Romans. He was given the name Stoick the Vast by his father; It was a name he lived up to fairly well, too. But this attack already gave him the distinct feeling that everything had just fallen apart for him.

"Look out!" One of the Vikings shouted towards Stoick.

He turned to see a low-flying Timberjack coming right for him as fast as his wings would allow. The sight of this beast was unnerving; he had never seen a dragon with such a long wingspan and in flight, its wings were sharper than any weapon they had. Stoick dove onto the ground to avoid being cut in half as the dragon let out a nerve-fraying shriek. The dragon flew right at the catapult, using his right wing to effortlessly slice through the thick wood of the weapon. All the Vikings who were prepping the catapult ran as fast as they could to avoid its collapse.

Stoick quickly climbed to his feet, his eyes never leaving the dragon as he tried to figure out where it was heading next.

The Timberjack continued to display great intelligence as it raced towards the blacksmith shop. "Not good!"

* * *

><p>"Come on, Hiccup! We've got to get on our dragons!" Astrid urged, itching to get into the fight. Astid was Hiccup's girlfriend and closest friend; they were seldom seen apart. While Hiccup was a shy, laid-back boy, Astrid was completely the opposite. She was overly aggressive, and never backed away from a fight. Even Hiccup was afraid of her from time to time. Female Viking warriors were rare, and she was determined to break that barrier and not become another stereotype; she wanted to be viewed and treated as a warrior, not just a Viking girl.<p>

"Just give me a second," Hiccup replied. "I've got to make sure that everyone has access to the weapons." Hiccup was the son of Stoick the Vast, the Viking chief. His life had not been an easy one, being a scrawny and clumsy young Viking from the very start. He and his father didn't have the best relationship for the longest time - awkward and forced at best. His father had been embarrassed by his ineptness, and refused to recognize his intelligence. He believed that wars were won by brute strength, not by smarts.

That all changed when Hiccup befriended a Night Fury named Toothless.

Since opening his father's eyes to the truth about dragons, their

relationship improved vastly, and they had since then made the dragons a part of the village. When they were visited by the legendary Ivar the Fearsome, they had to open his eyes to the truth as well. That proved much more difficult, but showing what he and Toothless could do together against a Shadow Lord, he too came around. Before he left, he bestowed Hiccup with his name: Hiccup the Horrendous.

Since being given that title, life had changed for him; Hiccup had gained new confidence in himself and was proving to be a decent leader. He was given the respect of a leader as well, and he now had a say when it came to wartime strategies. He was the leader of a group of young dragon-riding Vikings, made up of he and Astrid's closest friends. They were a great team that worked well together, and was called often to perform various tasks by his father.

Hiccup was also in charge of the blacksmith shop while Gobber was away in battle. Since he too was off fighting alongside him from time to time, Gobber and Hiccup had come up with a plan to allow free access to the weapon stash when an emergency, like this, ever arose.

"This is wild," Astrid commented breathlessly, watching with wide eyes as Hiccup frantically searched for the right key to unlock the all the weapon cabinets. "I've never seen the dragons act like this. I've never seen Timberjacks so aggressive, either. Something has to be up!"

"Yeah, I've been thinking the same thing," Hiccup replied. "Even Toothless is hiding, and he never runs from fight."

"Astrid, Hiccup, get out of there!" Bitwolf's voice shouted outside.

>Hiccup ran to the window to see a Timberjack coming straight for their shop. Hiccup was taken back; with all the other huts in the area, the dragon had correctly chosen to attack the one that could severely cripple the Vikings. There was no way a dragon could be that intelligent unless it was instructed to do so, but there was no one on the backs of these dragons. None of this made sense.<p>

"We've got to get out of here!" Astrid shouted.

"Too late, look out!"

Hiccup and Astrid dove for cover, hiding behind the forging station as the dragon unleashed a stream of red-hot flames into the shop. Astrid and Hiccup tightly coiled themselves as Hiccup hid behind the cast-iron anvil, and Astrid behind a shelf of swords. They couldn't contain their screaming as the flames engulfed the room, the heat, smoke, and bright fire surrounding them.

The dragon's attack on the shop ended quickly, but it was enough to catch the entire building on fire.

When Hiccup and Astrid stood up, the realization that they were trapped in a burning building finally hit them full-on. Flames blocked the way out of the hut as well, adding to their mental panicking. "We've got to find a way out of here!"

Hiccup knew she was right - then again, her statement had been pretty

obvious. The blacksmith shop was burning quickly, and if they didn't get out soon, the hutt would come crashing down upon them. Hiccup coughed as the smoke continued to harshly slip into his lungs; it felt like he was being clutched from the inside of his chest, and his throat was painfully scratchy. "I've got an idea! Help me tip this barrel of water over towards that door." Hiccup practically croaked, squinting against the harsh smoke and pointing to the rear door which led into his private hangout where most of his crazy inventions were stored.

Astrid had never been in that room; she respected his need for a place to just sit and think. She did, however, know enough about the landscape of the hut. "There's no way out of here from in there!" she accused, her voice as raspy as his as she had a coughing fit.

"I've got a *_*cough*_* secret exit. Haven't you ever wondered *_*cough cough*_* how I always seem to find a way *_*cough*_* outside after being ordered to *_*cough*_* stay put?"

"Well, now that you mention it *_*cough cough*_*, the thought had *_*cough*_* crossed my mind a few *_*cough*_* times," Astrid admitted, barely able to get her sentence out.

Coughing some more and deciding to not talk any more than necessary, they wordlessly positioned themselves behind the barrel of water, pressing their shoulders into it and pushing as hard as they could with their legs.

They managed to get their end of the barrel off the ground, but then it seemed to want to push them right back. Neither of them gave up, pushing even harder, desperate to get out of the extreme heat that felt like it was threatening to melt the skin right off their bones. The barrel finally began to relent, and the weight of the water switched from being a hindrance to an ally. The barrel tipped over, unleashing all of its contents. The water flowed towards the door, causing the surrounding flames to nearly extinguish.

"Let's go, hurry!" Hiccup rasped, running to the door and pushing it open. Astrid followed him into the room, both of them sighing in relief at the less-smoky air. Hiccup quickly closed the door behind them to buy them a few more seconds, and Astrid looked around at all of Hiccup's crazy inventions, which were now burning into rubble.

"So where's, uh...where's the exit?" she asked, coughing some more as the smoke increased little by little until she couldn't feel any more relief from when they'd been in the other room.

"You're standing on it."

Astrid looked underneath her feet to see that she was in fact standing on a wooden panel. She stepped aside so Hiccup could pull it up, smiling sheepishly. "After you," Hiccup croaked, shielding his eyes with his sleeve as they got more irritated by the smoke.

She didn't hesitate, immediately leaping into the hole in the ground. She found herself in a very narrow underground tunnel; the two of them had to crawl on their hands and knees to get through it, but at least it was much cooler in there. "I have to admit, you're probably the most undeterred and stubborn person I've ever known," she

declared after a few moments, both of them still practically gasping in the clearer air, sucking as much of it into their lungs as they could.

Hiccup smiled; this wasn't the first time he had been told he'd acquired his father's stubbornness. A few have suggested that he was even more so than his father. Either way, it appeared that his stubbornness was going to save their lives yet again.

When they reached the other end of the tunnel, they found themselves on the outskirts of the village. "Well, now what?" Astrid asked.

"Iâ€"I've got to stop those dragons!"

"There's two of those things up there," Astrid reminded him. "I'm not letting you go up there alone."

"There you are!" Snotlout said, running up to the two of them. Not far behind him was Ruffnut, Tuffnut, Fishlegs, and Bitwolf.

Snotlout was Hiccup's cousin, and son to Spitelout. There used to be a time when Snotlout had been jealous of Hiccup's position to become the next chief of Berk. Because of it, he often tormented Hiccup - he had led the assault of insults towards him before Hiccup met Toothless. That all changed when he started to cheat at dragon training. When Hiccup was caught in the lie, and tried to bring peace between the Vikings and the dragons, he was afraid that he had lost Snotlout's respect. After a successful battle against Green Death, the respect that they had for each other was solidified. Now, they would do anything to protect each other from harm.

"Let's go round up our dragons and kick some dragon butt!"

"No, no, the dragons are acting too irrational for all of us to find and get them into the sky. Berk could be burnt to the ground by the time we do."

"Then we'll just have to fight them on land! Everyone knows that I'm a deadly dragon killer," Tuffnut replied as if it were common knowledge.

"No, you're just a deadly oaf," Ruffnut replied. She and Tuffnut were identical twins who seldom agreed on anything. They took great pleasure in torturing each other either through words or, on occasion, through fists. Their bickering gotten in the way of a mission on more than one occasion, but both had proven themselves to be great aviaries on their two-headed Hideous Zippleback. Their conflicting natures seemed to fare well when bonding with their dragon; it seemed that the Zippleback related to their indifferences.

"I don't think that's such a good idea," Fishlegs replied. "We should definitely fight them in the air. That will give us a better chance of victory."

"Iâ€"Iâ€"Iâ€"|" Hiccup's mind was racing inside of his head. The two Timberjacks was making quick work of the village. "Astrid and I will take care of the Timberjacks. The rest of you see if you can distract them from causing any more damage."

Bitwolf smiled, seemingly happy to oblige. "Oh, those dragons'll pay attention to me, I promise you," he replied, waving his double-edged ax in the air enthusiastically. His comment drew some laughter among the others. Bitwolf was the newest member of the team; he had been banished to Berk after his father and he tried to overthrow Ivar the Fearsome. It took some time for him to rebuild the trust of the gang after he betrayed them, but he had managed to do it anyway, and had even become a vital part of the team.

"Good. Be careful, everyone! Everything we think we know about dragons...doesn't seem to apply here," Hiccup said thoughtfully, earning nods from the others.

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Running through the village, they could see, first hand, how much damage the dragons were doing. There was no mistaking that these dragons were out to level this village. What Hiccup could not figure out was why? These two dragons were acting unusually destructive while Berk's dragons were acting strangely fearful and uncooperative. This could not be a coincidence.

Running through the village, they had to dodge rampaging Vikings, who, on a few occasions, nearly tripped over them. As they reached the heart of the village, Astrid saw one of the Timberjacks swooping down, getting ready to shower more fire onto the village; the problem was... they were directly in his path.

"Look out!" Without thinking, Astrid shoved Hiccup as she leapt to avoid the flames. The dragon flew by quickly and disappeared to attack another part of the village.

As she was coming to her sense after their near brush with death, it dawned on her that she had landed awkwardly on top of Hiccup. He was staring up at her with an intense look of shock. "Uh, sorry. I, uh â€¦" Her face turned red as she climbed to her feet. She offered Hiccup a hand and helped him up to his feet.

"Uh, my hut is just up ahead." Now, it was Hiccup's turn for his face to turn red. The words had come out of his mouth before he realized that his comment might have been taken way out of context. "No, no, no, I mean, uh, that Toothless might be in there, you know? You should go and find your dragon."

"Oh, yeah, right, uh, I better go, then."

Both of them avoided eye contact at the awkward moment, as they were frozen in place for a minute, unsure what to say. Finally, Hiccup nodded and decided to be the first one to exit out of this uncomfortable deadlock that they had found themselves in. As soon as he did, Astrid turned and ran in a separate direction to go find her dragon.

Hiccup was relieved to see that his house was still standing, but with the fire spreading as rapidly as it was through every part of the village, he held to little hope that it would remain that way for

much longer. He ran inside, and hoped that Toothless was still inside. The last thing he could afford to do was to waste time looking for the hidden dragon.

As he threw open the door, he found Toothless inside, but he was stomping and storming, tearing up the house in the process. This was extremely weird. The dragon did not seem scared, but something had him very agitated. "Whoa, Toothless, what are you doing?"

The dragon did not seem to hear him. He was snorting, and growling and even clawing on the wooden walls. Hiccup was able to get a quick glance of his eyes, and he knew something was terribly wrong. Toothless' pupils were dilated, almost as if the dragon was sleep walking.

"Toothless, stop!" He urged, stepping closer to the dragon. Under most circumstances, approaching a frantic dragon like this was a very bad idea, especially for someone as small as Hiccup; he could end up being trampled to death.

The dragon still did not recognize his presence in the room. Toothless was acting like he was having a terrible nightmare. Perhaps, he could wake him up, and things will turn out okay; otherwise, the Timberjacks would become the least of his problems. As he stepped closer to the Night Fury, he had to duck to avoid the dragon's wings which began to flail wildly. It was as if he wanted to fly, but did not know that he was inside a building which made it impossible. He also seemed to have forgotten that he could not fly without Hiccup on his back.

"Calm down, Toothless. I need you to calm down for me." He stepped cautiously towards the dragon's face, and something seemed to prevent the dragon from moving his pupils to see him. Even as Hiccup stepped into his line of sight, he still did not recognize his presence.

"Whoa, calm down!" he said in a soft, soothing, monotone voice as he reached his hands towards his face. Toothless growled as if he was warning a predator from coming any closer. Foolishly, Hiccup did not back away. He reached out until both hands made contact with his face.

The moment his hands touched his scales, his eyes returned to normal, and his rampaging came to an end. He looked in both directions, as if he had no idea where he was, but then he looked towards Hiccup and let out a curious moan. Toothless had no recollection what had just happened. He seemed confused, but back to his normal self. "I don't know what's going on, Toothless, but right now, we have a job to do. Are you with me?"

The Night Fury, still a little disconcerted about what was going on, nodded his head and gave an affirmative moan. "Good. Let's get outside and stop those dragons!"

Hiccup grabbed the artificial tail-fin and went to open the door only to find himself staring into the eyes of a Timberjack. "Whoops!" He quickly slammed the door shut just in time to avoid the stream of fire that the dragon breathed at the hut. "We'll have to find another way out."

Suddenly, the walls began to combust. The Timberjack was blanketing the entire hut in flames, trying to burn it down to the ground with them inside. A part of Hiccup was horrified that he was watching his own home burn all around them, but he promptly recollected himself; survival had to be their primary focus at the moment.

With the building burning all around him, he quickly raced to attach the artificial tail-fin to Toothless' tail. Once more, his lungs began to feel like they were on fire as they were breathing in the smoke. He had fully recovered from the last time; his coughing started nearly immediately. It hindered his speed, which was the last thing they needed; it would not be much longer before the hut would collapse. He connected the last strap around the tail as burning planks of wood started to fall; the hut was already becoming unstable. Hiccup climbed up onto the saddle on Toothless' back. "Okay, boy, get us *_*cough*_* out of here."

Toothless took in a deep breath before unleashing a strong puff of blue flames with such force, that it blew a giant hole through the back wall, but it also caused the hut to start collapsing. The dragon leaped out of the hole just as the entire hut crumbled into one giant burning pile of wood.

"Let's go *_*cough cough*_* get those dragons."

Toothless growled as he spread his wings. With a good leap, they were up in the air. The higher they went, the more he was able to see the kind of damage that was being done. He was astonished at what he was seeing. The village looked like it was under attack by an entire flock of dragons. The two dragons were clearly determined in their mission to devastate the village. The fact that they were this determined, proved that they were not acting alone; something was controlling their actions.

Hiccup looked down to his right to see a Timberjack attacking the dining hall. On the ground, he could see Snotlout and Bitwolf doing their best in trying to fend off the dragon, but it seemed content to ignore them to bring down the dining hall. "There's one of them!"

Toothless saw the dragon and glided around to change course towards the dragon. Snotlout was the one who saw Hiccup and Toothless coming at them at maximum speed. He knew his cousin well enough to know what he was about to do. "Move it!"

The two of them fled from the dragon, giving Hiccup the clean shot that he needed. "Do it, Toothless!"

Toothless let out his war-cry squeal before shooting a puff of blue flames at the dragon. The Timberjack had no time to react as the flames hit him in the ribcage, sending him crashing into the burning dining-hall hut. The weakened walls gave way, as the dragon crashed all the way through the hut.

There was no time to wait for the dragon to come to his senses, there was another one out there, and he had to take care of it. Perhaps the attack had done enough to scare off the Timberjack off. He started looking for the second dragon when a stream of fire flew past the side of his face, nearly burning his head, and perhaps killing him. If it was not for Toothless' reaction, Hiccup could have been

killed.

He looked behind him to see the second Timberjack chasing them.
"Let's loose him!"

Hiccup pressed down on the pedal and leaned forward as Toothless picked up speed and flew through the village as fast as he could manage. Swerving around corners and huts, they attempted to lose the pursuing dragon through intense and precise flying through the village.

* * *

><p>Astrid found her Deadly Nadder running frantically by itself by the livestock. She knew her dragon by a small birthmark underneath the chin. The dragon had no interest in the sheep, but was acting very peculiar; almost as if it was seriously confused. If she did not know better, she would have guessed that the dragon thought he was a part of the flock.<p>

She ran up to the dragon and tried to calm him down. "Whoa! Calm down, already!" The Deadly Nadder was acting just as skittish as the sheep were. The dragon tried to pull away from her, but she refused to let him go; she had to show the dragon who's boss.

"Calm it down! I have a fist and I will use it!" Astrig said, waving her fist at the dragon.

The dragon's pupils returned to normal, and he started acting like a dragon once again. The Deadly Nadder looked curiously at Astrid and quickly recognized her. "That's better."

With the dragon under control, she wrapped a piece of rope that she had picked up on the way around the dragon's neck; that helped her to stay on its back while in flight. Hiccup was in the process of making a saddle for her that would fit the awkward form of the Deadly Nadder, but with the blacksmith burnt to the ground, it was safe to assume that it was long gone.

She leaped onto the back of the dragon and positioned herself closer to the neck of the dragon. "Hiya!" She yelled, which was the vocal command for fly. The dragon did just that. He slowly gained more and more height with each flap of his wings.

As she got a bird's-eye view of the village, she was astonished at the damage that had been done by just two Timberjacks. Down below, she could see the twins, Ruffnut and Tuffnut, and Fishlegs helping the adults rescue some trapped Vikings from a burning hut. It suddenly dawned on her that the hut belonged to Gertrude's family.

Gertrude was Snotlout's new girlfriend. After he gave up chasing after Astrid, when she made it abundantly clear that she was interested in Hiccup, he started to chase after a young Viking girl who worked in the bakery. For months, she was disgusted by Snotlout, but after he had come to her rescue from an enemy Viking, she had come to accept him. Astrid was glad that she did come around, because she had no desire to put up with Snotlout's pick-up lines, herself. She was glad that his attention was no longer on her.

She had no time to wait and find out if everything was alright with Gertrude; she had to help Hiccup with the Timberjacks that had come out of nowhere to attack their village. Looking around for either a Timberjack, or Toothless, she was confident that Hiccup had managed to get Toothless to cooperate. He was probably already engaging the dragons on his own.

That is what she loved about Hiccup. Yes, he was skinny, and lacked physical stamina, but he was as brave as any Viking she knew. He was more than willing to sacrifice himself for the benefit of his friends, his family, and his tribe. On rare occasions, she would have to make sure that he did not risk his life unnecessarily. He tended to take too much on his own shoulders, when he could depend upon her and the others to be there to help him. She was determined to keep him alive so he could take his father's place, one day, as Viking chief of Berk. That did not mean, that she did not allow him to take on dangerous tasks, she respected him way too much to deny him that. After all, there was no arguing that he was the best dragon rider in the village.

After flying around for a few moments, she found Hiccup being chased by one of the Timberjacks through the village. The Timberjack had no chance of matching Toothless' speed, but that did not stop the dragon from trying. Since there was no sign of the other dragon, she decided to drop in on this one and give the dragon a surprise that it would soon never forget.

She controlled her dragon into a dive, heading straight for the Timberjack. The Deadly Nadder launched a fire ball which hit the dragon in the back. The Timberjack broke off the chase with the Night Fury, and flew to retreat from the new attacker. "Let's see how you like being chased for awhile!"

"Astrid, behind you!" Hiccup yelled.

Astrid looked behind her to see the other Timberjack on a collision course towards her. She had no time to do anything, as the two dragons collided. The impact threw her off the back of her dragon and sent her freefalling to the ground. Fortunately, they were low enough to the ground that she landed harmlessly onto a cart of hay.

The two dragons were entangled up above the ground. They were wrestling for dominance, but the sheer size of the Timberjack proved too much for the Deadly Nadder. The dragon clenched his jaws around the Deadly Nadder's neck. The dragon squirmed and moaned, as his situation quickly became desperate. Overpowering the dragon, the Timberjack threw it into one of the burning huts. The dragon crashed through the burning building with such force, that the entire hut began to collapse on top of the dragon.

"No," Astrid gasped underneath her breath. She was helpless to watch as the hut collapsed on top of the dragon and the flames to continue to burn the pile of wood with intense heat.

Enraged by the turn of events, Hiccup and Toothless wasted no time in attacking the dragon with another puff of blue flames. The dragon was able to avoid the attack, barely, and flew off in retreat. The other Timberjack joined up with him as the two dragons flew towards the ocean and away from Berk. The attack had finally ended.

3. Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Just because the dragons had left, did not mean the danger was immediately over. The fire continued to rage throughout the village all through the night. As the sun started to rise, a storm pushed its way through and unleashed a torrential downpour. The rain proved exceedingly helpful in putting out the flames. Now, through the rain, Gobber and Stoick were walking through Berk, assessing the damage that had been done.

"Those beasts really did a number this time. They even got my shop! All my attachments were in there. This, here, is the only one I've got left." Gobber said, waving his ax-head attachment in the air.

"This is my fault. We let our guard down, and we paid dearly for it. We've forgotten that not all dragons can be reasoned with." Stoick replied. The sight of the devastation around him made him sick to his stomach.

"Now, don't go blaming yourself. There's no way we could've been ready for such an attack."

"It doesn't matter; I'm the Viking chief; the safety of this village rests solely on my shoulders."

"Stoick!" his brother, Spitelout, came walking up to them. "Everyone is accounted for with only a few minor injuries to report. The damage, however, is extensive. The dragons destroyed almost everything that was important for our survival."

"Dad!" Hiccup and Astrid came running up, appearing weary and battle worn.

"Hiccup, how are the dragons?"

Hiccup shook his head, not really knowing what to report. "As soon as the Timberjack arrived, all the dragons were acting like they were in a trance. Most of the dragons are safe; they went into hiding when the attack began. We did lose one Deadly Nadder in the attack: Astrid's dragon." Hiccup looked over at Astrid who remained quiet and emotionless. This was one of the rare times he could not pick up on what was going through her mind.

Stoick stroked his forehead as he felt a headache coming on. The damage to Berk was bad—real bad. They have had their fair share of destruction and chaos to overcome, but this was far worse. Their food supply, their building supplies, and even their weapon supplies were devastated. They barely had enough to survive another month, and they were quickly approaching winter.

"So what do we do now?" Spitelout asked.

"We've got no choice but to go for help. We'll set sail for the island off of the Visithug Territories and ask Ivar the Fearsome for help." Stoick turned to his son. "You and your friends go get some rest. You're coming with me."

* * *

><p>"We're gonna visit the Killagain Tribe?" Snotlout asked, not sure if he heard his cousin correctly or not.<p>

"Yep," Hiccup confirmed. "Toothless will be coming as well as a random Monstrous Nightmare."

"Why are we bringing the dragons?" Tuffnut asked.

"Ivar is really only interested in Toothless. I think he wants to show us off to his tribe. The Monstrous Nightmare we're bringing along only for security reasons. You never know what we may encounter during our journey."

"This is stupid," Bitwolf growled. "We don't need their help! Do you realize how dangerous the journey will be? There are dangerous sea dragons roaming those waters, but they're the least of your worries if the weather is bad."

"Stop being a coward! We're going there whether you like it or not!" Astrid snapped harshly, almost threatening him with her fist.

Her anger did nothing to faze Bitwolf, but everyone else was standing there in shock. No one had seen Astrid get this angry before. No one knew what to say or how to react. Feeling the eyes of everyone around her, she turned around and stormed off.

"Uh, don't mindâ€| her," Hiccup eventually said. "Shâ€|she's had a bad day. Bitwolf, I know how you must feel about going back to your old tribe, butâ€|"

"You know nothing about it!" Bitwolf snarled, stepping up to Hiccup as to provoke him to a fight. Ivar had banished him as consequences of his father's and his actions. Ivar had never been an easy man to get along with. He was a Viking chief that only ruled to serve himself. He shared none of the dragon-kills with anyone in the village. He sought to glorify his own honor, while treating his leaders like dirt. That was why his father, Wolfbane, had tried to kill him. They were sick of being treated like dogs that were only being fed leftover scraps from the table.

"Cool it, you guys!" Snotlout stepped in between the two of them, mostly for the protection of Hiccup, who would have been beaten to a pulp in a fist fight.

"I realize this is gonna be odd for you, but I can assure you that Ivar's not the same Viking. Your banishment here wasn't an act of punishment; it was an act of compassion."

"Yeah, whatever!" Bitwolf replied, reseating himself on top of a log and folding his arms.

Hiccup was not in the mood to discuss this any further. His mind was elsewhere at the moment. "Well, everyone rest up; we leave by mid-day." Hiccup looked up at the stormy clouds over their heads as the rains continued to come down. How anyone was going to know when mid-day arrived was beyond him.

Hiccup left to catch up with Astrid. When he did, he began to wonder if he should have left her alone. With her anger radiating around her, the words he had for her had disappeared from his mind. "So, uhâ€" don't you think you wereâ€" uhâ€" a little harsh on him?"

"You, of all people, should be the last one to take his side. He's manipulative, cocky, arrogantâ€"|"

"Maybe," Hiccup replied. It had only been a season ago when Bitwolf was assigned by his father to infiltrate their little group. He had tried everything to sabotage their group and even tried to woo Astrid away from him. Of all the Viikings, Hiccup had all the right to distrust Bitwolf. However, he had come to learn to forgive and forget. There was no point in festering in revenge and saturating in hate. Yes, Bitwolf was still rough around the edges, but given more time, he would begin to fit in more. "Somehow, though, I get the feeling that this isn't about him."

Astrid sighed with frustration. "I told you, that I'm fine. It's not like I had I bond with the dragon like you've got with Toothless. It was just another stupid dragon!"

"You don't sound too convincing, right now," Hiccup replied.

"Hiccup, don't! Justâ€"| don't!" Astrid threatened. Her angry face faded away, clearly not meaning to be this harsh on him. She knew he meant well, and that he was concerned about her. "Thank you, but don't." Astrid walked off, leaving Hiccup behind. This time, he knew better than to follow her.

* * *

><p>Hiccup was relaxing over at his uncle and cousin's hut, which was unharmed in the attack. They were supposed to be catching up on a little sleep before they headed out on their journey, but Hiccup was unable to do so. His mind would just not quit replaying the events of the day.<p>

He was sitting by the fire pit when his father entered the hut and walked up to him. "You should be getting some rest, Hiccup. We've got a long journey ahead of us."

"Eh, I couldn't sleep," Hiccup said.

"Aye, I can understand that," Stoick replied, sitting next to him. "Since you're awake, I want to talk to you about Bitwolf. Do you really think it wise to bring him with us? There's no telling what Ivar might do to him if he saw him again."

"He's a part of our gang, now. I've been trying hard to make him feel that way."

"Aye, that you have," Stoick agreed. "I just don't know if I trust him yet. Who's to say he won't run away the first chance he gets? What kind of trouble could he get himself in, on his own."

"Eh, I don't think he'll do that, Dad," Hiccup replied. "Something inside me tells me that we can trust him."

"I'll leave him in your capable care, then" Stoick replied. "You know, I'm proud of you, son. You've really matured in the past year. I've given you plenty of responsibility, and you've done a great job. You've no idea how it makes me feel to know that I'll have you to take my place when I'm gone."

"Thanks, dad," Hiccup smiled.

* * *

><p>Hiccup had no idea where he was; all he knew was that he had to run. Dodging branched, running around trees, and leaping over large rocks, the urgency to keep running was overwhelming. The only light he had to be able to see through the dense forest was the moonlight. It was enough for him to keep up a good pace, but it still did not seem good enough to outrun whatever was chasing him. It was hard enough to run with an artificial foot, which was not designed for this much action.<p>

He ventured a glance backwards where he could see the tree tops flinging as if they were being chopped by a giant ax. Towering over the forest was a large shadow shaped as a Viking holding ax. The shadow continued his pursuit of Hiccup, chopping the tree tops off in the process. The shadowy Viking giant laughed mockingly at his feeble attempt to escape.

Hiccup threw caution to the wind, and forced himself to go faster. As he did, a lightning bolt streaked across the sky and hit the ground in front of him. The impact threw him back onto his back-side. Sitting on the ground, stunned by nearly being hit by lightning, he looked around his surroundings. A flash of lightning briefly lit the sky up, but in that time, he saw an old woman standing there to his right. He could not be certain how old she was, but her face was so aged and wrinkly that her skin looked like wood. Her thin white hair made her look even creepier as she stared at him with her beady eyes.

Everything inside of him told him to run... and he was not one to go against his gut feelings. He struggled to get back to his feet, but when he did, he continued running through the forest. This time, he did not dare look back; he pressed on as hard as he could.

Abruptly, the forest came to an end. Surprised by the sudden change of landscape, Hiccup stopped and stared at his new surroundings. He was standing in front of a giant volcano. A red eerie glow came from inside the mountain, as it grumbled like a stomach begging for food. Without warning, the mountain erupted, spewing fire and magma into the air.

Hiccup's eyes were drawn to the spewing magma as a dark creature emerged. The creature was massive in height and length. As it stomped down the side of the volcano, Hiccup recognized the beast; it looked almost like Green Death, the dragon queen from the dragon's nest, but this dragon was even bigger, and uglier. This dragon also no longer had his wings; all it had were the skeletal frame of what used to be there. All the skin and muscles were gone.

The dragon had all six of its eyes focused on Hiccup as it made its way to the young Viking like a predator stalking its prey. It let

out an ear-splitting roar that would scare even the bravest Viking. After the dragon reached the bottom of the mountain, it charged at Hiccup with surprising and terrifying speed.

* * *

><p>Hiccup nearly fell out of his chair as he was startled awake by the terrifying nightmare. He was not even aware that he had fallen asleep, but his shaken nerves told another story. His heart was pounding, mercilessly, in his chest, and he was drenched in a cold sweat. The images were chiseled into his memories; images that would stick with him for a very long time. He could not remember the last time when a dream, or nightmare, had felt so real.<p>

"Wake up, we've got to go!" Snotlout walked past him, slapping on the back, unaware of the experience he had just gone through.

Hiccup moaned, as he knew he probably looked as bad as he felt. This was not the first nightmare that had prevented him from getting sleep. For the past three days, these nightmares would come and keep him up at night; but he refused to tell anyone. If his father knew that he had not slept in days, then he would think that he was not ready for the mantle of leadership. He was determined to prove that he was ready for it.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Getting Toothless onto the ship was not hard at all; it was the Monstrous Nightmare that proved to be a challenge. The dragon was not accustomed to traveling on a boat. The size of the dragon also proved to be challenging; the dragon would have to travel on a different ship because there was no room for two dragons on just one. A ship, at the very least, must have at least eight Vikings to paddle the boats in case they experienced a lack of wind. It also had to have a Viking to steer the boat and one to be the lookout and/or give the commands as to where to steer the ship. To get a dragon on board took up almost all of the remaining space, especially one the size of a Monstrous Nightmare.

They had three ships ready to make the journey, and the time to set sail had finally come. With the rough seas that they were about to travel, Stoick expected to arrive at the Killagain tribe's village by sunrise. It would have been wiser to leave at sun-rise instead of mid-day, but having spent all night defending the village from the dragons, he thought it better to allow the young Vikings to rest before making the journey.

"Do what you can to ration what food we've got left til we return. With Odin's blessing, we'll be back with help, building materials, and some spare food." Stoick told his brother, Spitelout. "If the dragons return, your priority is to protect the food supply and the livestock."

"Don't worry. We'll be fine til you return."

"We'll be back as soon as possible."

Stoick made his way onto the ship with Toothless, Gobber, Hiccup and his friends. They would be the lead ship in the convoy. After he was safely on board, the ships departed for what would be a very long journey.

* * *

><p>The journey started very smoothly. The rowers were not needed because the wind seemed to favor their travel. It seemed like Odin and the gods were showing them good fortune during this dire and perilous times. What hiccup found most surprising was that Toothless was enjoying the ride. Hiccup feared that his last experience on a Viking ship, being chained and yoked by his father, would cause him to be very tense on the ship. That did not turn out to be the case; on the contrary, he was bouncing around and pushing Vikings out of the way to stick his neck past the edge of the boat. Of course, some of Vikings were starting to get a little testy about being pushed around by the over-enthused Night Fury.<p>

As Toothless gazed out into the vastness of the blue, ocean's water, a school of jumping fish started skipping over the water's surface like tiny dolphins. The Night Fury's eyes watched, fascinated by the sight of leaping fishes. As the school of fish skipped beside the boat, the dragon became delighted.

Licking his lips, he lowered his neck over the edge of the boat and snapped at the fish, hoping to catch himself a nice mid-day snack. When his mouth came up empty, he snapped a few more times, but still was unable to catch anything. Almost in mocking fashion, a lone fish leaped out of the water and ended up slapping Toothless across the face. The dragon shook his head and looked around in bewilderment.

Hiccup chuckled as he looked around at the others on the boat. His father was taking his turn steering the ship while Gobber was sitting on the ground, fidgeting with his stone tooth. Elsewhere on the ship, Astrid and Ruffnut were keeping to themselves; it appeared that Astid was still not in a talking mood. Bitwolf was keeping to himself, clearly still brooding over this trip back home. Tuffnut and Snotlout were laughing at some joke that one of them had told. Fishlegsâ€¦ he had no idea what he was doing. He was at the bow of the ship and had been there for quite awhile.

Curiosity got the better of him, and he walked towards the front of this ship. "Hey Fishlegs, you okay over here?"

The young Viking turned towards him and Hiccup had to take a step back. His face was turning green before his very eyes. "Chances ofâ€¦ regurgitationâ€¦ a hundred percent." Fishlegs quickly leaned over the side of the ship and unleashed the contents of his stomach.

"I'll check up on youâ€¦ later," Hiccup said, doing everything he could not to get sick to his stomach.

A loud moan disturbed the peaceful sounds of the soft splashing of water up against the sides of the boat. Everyone was back on their feet, having heard the noise. Stoick handed the wheel back to Gobber as he stepped towards the front of the boat. "Hiccup, did you hear that?"

"Perhaps it was just the creaking of the wood?"

"No," Stoick replied. "I know every crick that this ship makes and every crack in its hull. We're not alone out here."

Another loud moan came from underneath them, but this time it ended with a high-pitched squeal. There was no mistaking that noise; there was something gigantic beneath them.

Springing out of the water, near their ship, was a massive silver-scaled dragon which looked more like a giant sea serpent with a dragon head. It had crystal blue eyes, horns all around the neck, and giant fangs. It looked directly down at them and let out a fierce roar. Two more creatures appeared between the three boats.

Bitwolf growled in frustration; he knew this was going to happen. These seas were full of unimaginable terrors. "They're Sea Devils. Part sea serpent and part dragon. They always attack in packs."

"Everyone, grab your weapons!" Stoick shouted.

As everyone went for their axes and hammers, Hiccup ran up to Snotlout. "Hop on with me; I'll take you over to the other ship so you can hop on Blue."

The two young Vikings rushed through all the chaos on the boats to get to Toothless. The dragon was looking up at the menacing dragons that towering over the ships, and he was ready for battle. Hiccup leaped onto the saddle and clamped his artificial foot into the specially designed pedal. He then reached down and helped Snotlout up. "Hold on!"

Toothless leaped off the ship and flapped his wings to pull himself up into the air. The closest Sea Dragon saw the Night Fury taking to the sky and perceived him as an imminent threat. Letting out a threatening shrill, the Sea Devil lunged at black dragon.

"Wha€"wha€"whoa!" Snotlout yelped and held onto Hiccup tightly as he directed Toothless to make a sharp turn to avoid the lunging dragon. They narrowly avoided the Sea Dragon as it dived past them and back into the water until it was completely submerged.

The Monstrous Nightmare was on the next ship, but there were two Sea Devils in their way and at least one swimming underneath the water. The one, or ones, underneath the water were the least of his concern at that moment. His focus was on getting around the two dragons and getting Snotlout onto the other boat with the Monstrous Nightmare.

The only problem was that this Monstrous Nightmare was not Snotlout's. Hiccup had given the name 'Blue' to this dragon, because of its abnormal shades of blue scales rather than red and orange. However, he had full confidence in Snotlout's ability to control the dragon.

The two remaining Sea Dragons turned their attention towards them. If Hiccup did not know better, he would have sworn that they knew what they were trying to do and were determined to stop them. "Hold on

tight, and get ready for some fancy flying."

"I don't know if my stomach can handle any more of your kind of flying!" Snotlout protested.

There was no time to reply, the closest Sea Devil turned to face them, and they had to make a move now. With a soft pat on Toothless' neck, Hiccup signaled him to attack the approaching dragon with a fiery puff. Toothless breathed in deeply and unleashed the bluish puff of flames directly into the face of the Sea Devil.

The dragon squealed in agony, clearly having a low tolerance for fire, especially blue flames. The attack provided ample distraction to allow Toothless to, aggressively, fly around the head of the stunned Sea Devil. The second Sea Devil hissed in anger. By the reaction of this third dragon, Hiccup surmised that this was the alpha dragon.

Hiccup flew Toothless straight at the alpha dragon, lining the other Sea Devil directly behind them. The alpha dragon lunged towards them, taking the bait that Hiccup had laid out for it. "Hard right, Toothless!"

Toothless pulled hard right and the alpha dragon collided into the other. With the two dragons dazed from the collision, Hiccup had enough time to fly down to the ship. Toothless hovered low enough to allow Snotlout to jump off.

"Try to get Blue up quickly. If he becomes stingy, you know how to earn his trust."

There was loud screaming coming from the third boat. The third Sea Devil had reemerged and began to coil itself around the ship. The sail was destroyed and came crashing down onto the side of the boat before tipping over the edge. It sank to the bottom of the sea as the dragon began its strangle hold on the boat. All the Vikings on the boat were throwing everything they had at it; swinging their axes and hammers at the body of the dragon. Unfortunately, the dragon's body had a very thick layer of scales, making it impossible for their weapons to penetrate.

The dragon continued to strangle the ship until it started to crack. "Abandon ship!"

The Vikings on the ship followed their orders. They ceased their attack on the dragon, and jumped out of the ship and into the cold water. As the final few were evacuating, the ship gave under the stress, causing it to split into half. Both halves began to sink to the bottom of sea.

"Snotlout, you get the Vikings out of the water and onto the other ships. I'll distract the dragons."

Hiccup did not bother waiting for a response; he had to go after that dragon before it had the chance to attack any of the Vikings in the water. Hiccup gave Toothless the signal, and Toothless fired a very strong puff of flames at the dragon's neck. The dragon, again, swung his head wildly at the intense pain. The Sea Devil turned its focus upon them, not willing to give up so easily this time.

Hiccup and Toothless swooped across the dragon's line of vision, and as they had hoped, the dragon followed after them, forgetting about the Vikings in the water. Hiccup looked back and around the pursuing dragon to see Snotlout and Blue already busy at work; helping the Vikings out of the water. The blue Monstrous Nightmare was able to grab two Vikings at a time and fly them over to one of the two remaining ships.

"Okay Toothless, you know what to do."

Toothless grunted, knowing exactly what they were about to do. This was a move that they had perfected against the dragon queen, and with these dragons sensitive to fire, there was no doubt that the attack would work. Toothless slowed down to allow the Sea Devil to catch up. Before it had the chance to lunge, Toothless spun around and spat a puff of blue flames into the mouth of the dragon.

The silver dragon let out a loud shriek; the dragon was devastated by the attack. The dragon either raced back into the water, or collapsed; Hiccup could not tell, but he was more than certain that the dragon had no intention of entering the fight again.

Hiccup looked back at the other two Sea Devils. The alpha Sea Devil was attacking his father's ship. The dragon was taking a different approach and was attacking the Vikings directly. He could see Astrid swinging her ax whenever the dragon's giant fangs got too close to her. Bitwolf, like always, was becoming over aggressive. During one of the lunges, He had managed to get onto the dragon's body. He crawled up to the head of the dragon where he stood up and was about to bring the blade of the ax down on the skull of the dragon.

The dragon felt his presence on top of his head and shook it. Bitwolf lost his footing and his weapon, which dropped all the way into the water and sank. As he started to slide off the dragon, he managed to grab hold of a horn underneath the dragon's right ear.

"Come on Toothless, we've got to go get him before he kills himself," Hiccup said.

Toothless groaned in protest. The dragon did not like Bitwolf. He had not forgiven him for his past sins against Berk and its dragons. Unfortunately for Bitwolf, a Night Fury's memory was very long lasting. He reluctantly pushed himself as fast as he could go towards the Sea Devil.

Bitwolf lost his grip on the horn and fell towards the water. Hiccup used his weight to lean right, which in turn, told Toothless to glide sideways. They glided in speedily, and Toothless pulled back at the last second to reach out with his claws and grab Bitwolf in mid-air.

Toothless returned to flying normally, but the alpha dragon saw the rescue of Bitwolf and also saw an opportunity to attack. The dragon lunged for the Night Fury. On the ship, Astrid saw that Hiccup and Toothless did not see the danger that they were in. She raised her ax above her head, knowing that she was about to lose the weapon forever. The ax was a family heirloom and had special meaning to her. She was ready to give it up if it meant saving Hiccup.

Before she had the chance to throw her weapon, Stoick stepped up next

to her holding a large stone hammer over his head, and chucked it at the lunging dragon. The hammer spiraled all the way to its target, where it smacked into the side of the Sea Devil's head, causing it to fall sideways into the water.

Hiccup turned Toothless around to make his way to the ship to put Bitwolf safely onboard, when he saw the other remaining Sea Devil in the process of a diving attack on the ship. Tapping Toothless on his scales, the dragon fired a massive fiery shockwave at the dragon, which threw the dragon backwards into the water.

As toothless descended towards the ship, Hiccup quickly noticed the shadows of all the Sea Devils under water fleeing the area. They were giving up on what they thought should have been an easy prey, but the dragons had not counted on countering fire-breathing dragons being on bored these ships. For now, the threat seemed to be over.

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

The Sea Devils were not coming back. Things were starting to calm down, which give Stoick time to assess the damage. One ship was lost, and a good number of their weapons was gone. Luckily, there were no injuries or fatalities.

"We're down one ship. Should we head back home and pick up another?" One of the Vikings asked.

"No," Stoick responded quickly. "We move on. We can't let this stop us; Berk is counting on us."

"It's gonna get a little cramped on both ships, especially on the other with Blue," Gobber said.

"Blue is a very restless dragon. He doesn't seem to like being cramped up for long periods of time," Hiccup added.

"Then someone onboard that ship will have to fly him, every so often. We'll have to make do with what we have. Now, let's set sail before those beasts do decide to come back."

"This is a mistake," Bitwolf spoke out, before Hiccup could stop him. "Sea Devils are nothing compared to what's out there. It's foolish to attempt such a journey with just two boats."

Stoick's eyes narrowed towards the young Viking. "Boy, you better learn your place when you're on my ship."

When Bitwolf did not back down, Hiccup had no choice but to step between them and intervene. His father still did not trust Bitwolf and had questioned the decision to bring him along. Being responsible for Bitwolf, Hiccup had to cool things down between them.

"Uh, Sorry, Dad. He didn't mean to question your authority, especially in front of the other Vikings," Hiccup looked back at Bitwolf with an angry look painted across his face. It was a look that said to drop this argument, immediately!

Stoick grunted as he turned away to prepare the ship to commence the journey.

* * *

><p>Night had fallen, and the ships used the light from the giant-sized full moon in the sky to direct their way. There was a gentle cool breeze that brought a slight chill to the night. There was just something so soothing and peaceful about the sight of a full moon along with the sound of the calm sea splashing against the sides of their ship.<p>

Hiccup was sitting up against the side of the boat, with his arms wrapped around his knees, caught up in the mesmerizing sight and sound. It was only the voice of Astrid, who was able to break him out of it. "Big moon out tonight."

"Yeah. Maybe this means smooth sailing the rest of the way."

"Odin willing." Astrid sat down on the ground next to Hiccup. "Listen, I'm sorry for snapping at you earlier. I really didn't mean to take my frustration out on you or Bitwolf, for that matter."

"You don't need to apologize. Losing your dragon can't be easy."

"That's just it," Astrid replied. "I'm not angry about my dragon dying. Like I said, I didn't have a strong bond with it."

"What do you mean?" Hiccup asked.

"Everyone else has begun to forge a bond with their dragons; they've even given their dragons names. I've never had that kind of partnership with my dragon."

Hiccup was starting to get the picture. He did notice more and more Vikings were giving names to dragons and bonding with them. Fireworm, the Monstrous Nightmare, was Snotlout's dragon, and their mannerisms were nearly identicle. Fishlegs had the same rapport with his Gronkle, Horrorcow. Even more recently, His father had come to grow close to two dragons: a Gronkle named Newtsbreath, and a Monstrous Nightmare named Hookfang. Ruffnut and Tuffnut still had to name their's; they were always fighting about what to name their Hideous Zippleback. Bitwolf was not yet ready to have his own Dragon. Hiccup was not ready to put him in charge over any one dragon's care.

"I'm sure that when we get back, we can find a dragon that you can relate to and bond with."

"I don't want just any dragon," Astrid said, shaking her head. "Let's face it; most of our dragons at Berk are not that bright. They'll be friends with whoever gives them a fish. I want a dragon that can understand me. I want to share the same kind of bond with a dragon as you share with Toothless." Astrid scooted up right next to him and laid her head on his shoulder as she staired up at the moon.

Hiccup could understand why she felt the way she did. She was a very aggressive girl, who really only sought to prove herself to all the men that she belonged. In a way, she was very much like Hiccup. While he was shy and timid in his approach to loneliness, she was strong

and bold in her approach. They were two different approaches, but for them, they both had led them down a path of seclusion. Maybe that was why the two of them hit it off so well. Most people would look at them and see polar opposites, but the way Hiccup saw it, they were kindred spirits, but just in different disguises.

"Iâ€œI'm sure that somewhere, out there, there's a dragon flying around waiting for a friend like you."

When Astrid did not reply, he gently turned his head to see that she had fallen asleep with her head still on his shoulder. She had been more exhausted than she appeared, but that was probably the case for most of the Vikings here.

With Astrid fast asleep, Hiccup returned his gaze to the moon until he had dozed off, as well.

* * *

><p>A loud crackle of thunder startled Hiccup awake. He sat up, to see that he was drenched to the bone as the clouds unleashed their fury upon them. The waves were rocking the boat violently. He realized how tired he must have been to be able to sleep part-way through a massive storm like this.<p>

He jumped up to the feet just as the boat began to be lifted by a giant waved. The angle the boat took caused him to stumble back into the side of the boat. His artificial foot was making it near impossible to stay on his foot when the boat was unsteady. He found himself needing the support of the rim to stay on his feet.

All the Vikings were franticly trying to hunker down to keep the high winds from destroying the central mast sail. All paddles were drawn into the ship so not to have them ripped away by the sea. At the other end of the ship, Toothless was unnerved by the violent storm. He was trying to stay out of everyone's way, but the dragon main focus were on all the streaks of lighting in the sky.

Hiccup used the ship's rim to aid him as he fought against almost everything to get towards his father. He was getting in the way of a few Vikings, who were busy trying to keep the ship afloat, but under the circumstances, no one was going to complain about it. "Dad, what's going on?"

"The fury of Helheim is against us. This storm came out no where."

A wave pounded against the side of the boat, further drenching Hiccup in a large splash of water. The water knocked him off his feet and unto his knees.

As busy as Stoick was, he could see that his son was having trouble staying on his feet. The boy had never been on a ship during a severe storm with his artificial foot. "Hiccup, stay low or you'll be washed overboard!"

"I can still help!" Hiccup pulled himself to his feet, and ran to help Snotlout and Bitwolf with one of the ropes attached to the central mast to keep it from breaking. It was taking three ropes just to keep it steady. On one of the other ropes, Ruffnut and Tuffnut were helping two adult Vikings.

"Daisy? That's a stupid name! I don't want my dragon given a girly name. Besides, the dragon's a boy!" Tuffnut scowled.

"No she's not, and you're an idiot!" Ruffnut replied.

"Ah, show's what you know! Everyone knows that I'm the smart one!"

"You don't even know what sex our dragon is!"

Hiccup shook his head, even will all Helheim breaking loose around them, the twins always had time to fight. The boat started to climb over another big wave. As the front of the boat started to rise, Hiccup lost his footing and his grip on the rope.

Hiccup slid towards the back of the boat where the angle of the boat had become so steep, he was heading right towards the water. He scratched and clawed for something to grab hold of, but his fingers could find nothing. "Whoa!"

"Hiccup!" Astrid ran for Hiccup as Bitwolf instinctually prepared the rope for Astrid, knowing what she was going to attempt to do. She ran past Bitwolf, grabbing the rope as she went by, then leaped onto her chest. She slid down the soaked wood-planked floor, sloshing in the water on the way down. Snapping her left arm out, her hands clasped onto his. Seeing that she had him, Bitwolf tightened the rope, and Astrid felt her body swing around violently, but she managed to keep her hold of the rope. The two young Vikings dangled there until the ship made it over the wave.

Stoick was quick to get over to Hiccup and Astrid and help >them back onto their feet. "You two okay?"<p>

"Yeah, that was a little too close," Hiccup replied.

"Uh, Stoick, we've got a wee bit of a problem!" Gobber said.

He looked out to see that the last wave had turned them sideways, and now an even bigger wave was coming at them that could easily tip them over. "Rowers to port side; turn us starboard!"

Four Vikings went to the port side of the ship and stuck their paddles out of the holes in the side of the ship. They fought against the water and gave it their all to get the ship to face towards the coming wave.

They managed to get the ship diagonal to the wave when it came crashing down on them. All the Vikings held on with all of their might. Astrid held on to boat as tightly as she could, but the wave of water proved to be too much. She bellowed out a scream as the water picked her up and threw her overboard.

"Astrid!" Hiccup screamed.

As the wave had cleared, Hiccup ran to the side of the boat to see Astrid struggling to keep afloat in the deadly ocean water. She would not be able to stay afloat for very long; these waves would quickly crash down on her and drown her. Without thinking, he climbed up onto the side of the boat.

"Hiccup, don't!" Stoick shouted.

Hiccup leapt into the ocean. Nothing more was important, at that very moment, than to save Astrid. He was not about to leave her in the water to drown. He swam against the wind and the waves to get to Astrid. When he reached her, he realized that jumping into the water was not the best idea he ever had.

"Are you **gasp** crazy? What were **gasp** you thinking?"

"Seemed like **gasp** a good idea **gasp** at the time."

Toothless was going frantic. To see Hiccup in danger, and being helpless to do anything about, was causing the dragon to become uncontrollable. Never in his life did the dragon feel so helpless.

The waves were pulling the two young Vikings away from the ship, and Stoick knew that it would be impossible to get the ship to them in this weather. "Who here can ride the Night Fury?"

Bitwolf grumbled, cursing this whole journey under his breath. He ran over to the dragon, but the second he approached, Toothless growled threateningly at him. The dragon was not about to let him on his back. Bitwolf had no choice but raise his hands in surrender and back away.

"I can do it," Snotlout said, stepping up to the Night Fury.

Toothless was at ease with Snotlout, and allowed him to climb onto his back. When on top, Snotlout found it very weird to be riding on a saddle. Getting his foot into the pedal that was specifically designed for Hiccup's artificial foot was awkward, but he was sure he could get a handle on it. He managed to get the artificial fin to expand and then Toothless took it from there.

The dragon did not need commands or directions; he already knew what had to be done, and how to do it; all he needed was someone to ride on his back and keep the artificial tail fin from collapsing.

Toothless leapt into the sky and fought against the wind to reach the two young Vikings in distress. Like any other dragons, he was stronger than he appeared; and though flying against the wind proved challenging, his determination gave him the strength to reach them. He swooped down aggressively and scooped them out of the water. After gaining enough distance from the water, he rode the wind all the way back to the ship. After gently placing the young Vikings onto the deck, he flew to the other side of the mass to land.

Helping Snotlout off the back were Ruffnut and Tuffnut. Stoick ran to his son and helped him and Astrid to the feet. "The storm's getting worse. You may want to stay close to Toothless, seeing that he is adequate in maneuvering above and below water."

"Hey Stoick, you should take a look at this!" Gobber called out to him, shouting over the loud whooshing of the wind and the sizzle-like sound of the rain coming down.

Stoick pushed his way over to Gobber who was at the starboard bow of the ship. "What do you see?"

"Land! There's a giant island directly ahead!"

It was so dark outside, that it was impossible to see anything. It was only for a split second, during a bright flash of lightning, was he able to see an outline of the island with a giant mountain at the very heart of it. It looked very much like a volcano, which quickly told him that this was not the island they were looking for. "That's not our destination."

"No, but it's our salvation! We've got to get to shore and take shelter. We've not seen the worse of this storm, yet; and I don't think we want to, either."

Stoick knew that he was right; if they stayed out on the sea for much longer, none of them were going to survive. They had to head towards the shore and take shelter for the night; the journey could wait until the storm passed. "Set sail for that island. All men to their stations and row as hard as you're capable of. All weak swimmers, head towards the Night Fury and my son, in case we capsize."

Astrid was not a weak swimmer, but she joined Hiccup over by Toothless to help him with anyone who may need it. It turned out that the only one that came over was Fishlegs, which came to no surprise to anyone.

Stoick looked back to look for the second ship, but he could not see them through the rain. "Gobber, do you see the other ship?"

"A Monstrous Strangulator can see better than I can right now," Gobber shrugged.

"Hiccup! Have Toothless fire up puffs of flames up into the sky. I need them to know about our change of course."

Hiccup nodded and walked around to the dragons neck. "Toothless, let's shoot some fire up in that direction!" Hiccup pointed up where he wanted the shots to be fired.

Toothless understood and looked in the direction that Hiccup had pointed. When Hiccup tapped him on the side of his neck, Toothless spat out a strong puff of blue flames. Hiccup had Toothless do it again one minute later, and then one final time a minute after that.

"Good, now hold on tight. It's going to be a rough ride to shore," Stoick said.

The waves continued to pound on the ship as the Vikings fought against nature to reach the shore. They were making good progress, and the island was growing closer and closer. Hiccup had a good feeling that they were going to make it through this after all.

"Hey look!" Astrid called out.

Everyone looked up to the sky to see Blue flying past them over their heads. As he passed them, he unleashed a breath of flames. Hiccup

could see the shadow of a Viking on the dragon's back; the other ship was acknowledging the course adjustment.

"Good, they got the message, and they're sending someone out to scout the shore." Stoick said, feeling better now that he knew that the other ship was still following them.

"Rock!" One of the Vikings yelled from the front of the boat. The Viking came running up to Gobber and Stoick in sheer terror. "We're heading straight for a rock!"

Shielding his eyes from the rain that was coming in at his face, he made his way to the front of the ship and looked out. As soon as another lightning flash lit up the sky, he could see the giant boulder that was sticking out of the sea. And they were on a collision course right for it. "Hard to port side!"

All the rowers on the starboard side ceased rowing as the rowers on port side paddled as hard as they could. They were able to point the ship to the left of the boulder, but the waves continued to push them straight for it anyway.

The sea threw their starboard side right into the rock. It ripped the side of the boat to shreds, and ripped up planks from the hull. The ship immediately began to take on water.

There was no way around this kind of damage; they had less than a minute before the boat would be completely submerged. The ship was already ripping apart. "Abandon ship! Everyone, swim for the shore!"

"But, but, butâ€¦ I can't swim!" Fishlegs said frantically, watching the water climb up to his ankles.

"Get on, quick!" Hiccup said, pushing him towards the saddle on Toothless' back. "Toothless is a good swimmer. He'll get you to the shore. Just hold on tight." Hiccup helped his chubby friend climb onto the saddle, and he showed him where to hold on to.

"How about you, Hiccup? With your foot, you're not the best swimmer either, especially in this." Astrid asked.

"We'll both need to hold onto the straps of the saddle. We should be able to make it," Hiccup replied. The water was already up to their knees and rising. "Okay Toothless, we're depending on you. Let's jump!"

Astrid and Hiccup jumped out of the sinking boat first followed by Toothless. "Whoa!" Fishlegs yowled as the dragon leaped head-first into the water.

Astrid and Hiccup were able to tread water until Toothless' head reemerged from the water. When he did, they swam to the dragon and felt for a strap until they could find it.

"Go on, Toothless! Everybody, hold your breath!"

Toothless grunted as he dived into the water. Under the sea, he swam with amazing speed and agility. He swam almost like a serpent, but with his claws paddling wildly. Occasionally, Toothless came up for

air; not necessarily for him, but for the three young Vikings who had smaller lungs and were unable to hold their breaths for long periods of time.

It was not long before the water became shallow enough for them to walk on. Hiccup, Astrid, and Fishlegs went by foot the rest of way onto the shore. As soon as they stepped foot onto the sandy beach, the young Vikings collapsed with exhaustion. They watched as one by one, Vikings started to swim on shore.

All the young Vikings were among the first to arrive on shore, which put Hiccup's mind at ease. Further calming his nerves was when his father and Gobber came on shore. Hiccup was not sure if Gobber would be a good swimmer, but seeing him coming onto the shore told him otherwise. Perhaps some time, he could ask him to help him become a better swimmer.

The rain started to subside as more Vikings came on shore. The clouds were evaporating before their very eyes at an unreal pace. Hiccup had to question if there was more to this storm than they realized.

Hiccup was not the only one who noticed the sudden change in the weather. Stoick was puzzled to see the full moon starting to peek through the clouds. "What in Odin's name?"

"Crazy weather we're having," Gobber commented.

Stoick was really curious about the weather, but there were more important to worry about first. "Okay, we have to set up camp for the night. We need two camps; one for the men and one for the women. The priority is to get some fires going and getting dry."

6. Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Two camps were set up near the edge of the forest. The first camp was for the three female Vikings, who had come on this journey. They had their own firepit and the men had even constructed a divider to separate the camps using thick tree branches and large palm leaves.

On the other side of the divider was the larger of the camps. There were three fire pits that were going, since there were many male Vikings that needed to keep warm and dry. Each camp had constructed clotheslines near the fire pits so their outer garments could be dried by the fire. Everyone was instructed to strip down to their undergarments so that their clothes could be dried, and the chances of illness were minimalized.

It took awhile for all this to be completed, but fueled by their determination, they were able to get it done and relax around the fire before going to sleep. Hiccup sat by the fire along with Bitwolf, Snotlout, Fishlegs, and Tuffnut. He was checking out the condition of his artificial foot and lower-leg. Most of it was wood, so he knew that he would need a replacement as soon as possible. It would not be long before it became moldy and would cause an infection.

"Well, this is fun," Snotlout said, mildly sarcastically. "Sitting around a fire, in our undies, and roasting fish on a stick on a strange island."

"Chances of survival are currently sixty percent," Fishlegs commented, turning his fish around to allow the other side to cook. "Even by me, those are good odds."

"I knew this was gonna happen. I tried to warn you all," Bitwolf grumbled. "No one here understands this side of the Barbaric Archipelago."

"Actually, getting shipwrecked is common for us Berk Vikings," Hiccup replied. "I don't think we've got anything to worry about."

Hiccup looked over at the palm leaf barrier. Toothless was keeping guard over the ladies while the males had Blue. Hiccup did not say it out loud, but he wanted Toothless with the girls mostly because he was the only dragon Hiccup trusted well enough to protect Astrid. If she had known this, however, she would have probably given him a black eye.

* * *

><p>Hiccup was scavenging the woods with his knife, determined to find his prize. No one believed him that he shot down a Night Fury, but he was determined to show them otherwise. After he showed his father what he did, perhaps then he would think better of him. He knew he hit the Night Fury last night with his Bola launcher. Yes, it may have been a lucky shot, but he was certain that it was a gift from the gods to finally start his quest to become a Viking warrior.<p>

As he spent the morning searching for the dragon, he continued to come up empty. "Oh, the gods hate me! Some people lose their knife or their mug. No, not me! I managed to lose an entire dragon!"

Out of frustration, he swung at a branch that appeared in front of his face, but instead of breaking off, it swung back and hit him across the face. "Ow!"

Hiccup was ready to curse the gods, but he noticed all the broken branches and the dug up dirt. Something had crashed right here and slide over the ridge right up ahead. Could this be the Night Fury that he was looking for?

He took a step towards the ridge when a giant black dragon started to rise from the other side of the ridge. This was not a Night Fury that was approaching. This dragon was almost twice the size and had a much more defined snout. He was face-to-face with a Shadow Lord.

"Uh-you're not the Night Fury! "

The dragon shook his head and let out a nerve chilling roar. When the dragon returned his gaze down on him, Hiccup took notice of an old woman, with an extremely wrinkled face standing on the dragon's head. He could not shake the feeling that he had seen this woman countless of times before. Despite her familiarity, he could not put a name to

the face.

The Shadow Lord took a deep breath as he could see the flames rolling around in the back of the dragon's mouth. Hiccup knew he needed to run for his life, but his legs would not cooperate with him out of sheer terror. He remained frozen in place as the dragon unleashed a massive stream of flames.

* * *

><p>"No!" Hiccup sat up, barely able to keep his breath. The nightmares continued to get worse. All he wanted was a peaceful night of sleep, but it appeared that the gods were going to continue to make him suffer.<p>

Seeing that he was not going to get anymore sleep for the night, he decided to get away and spend some time alone. He reached for his clothes, and found them still a little damp, but well on the way of becoming dry. It was good enough, for now. After getting dressed, he made his way to the shore.

Sitting down on the sandy beach, he looked up and gazed at the full moon. As much as he wanted to forget about the dreams he had been having, his thoughts kept on dwelling on the last few he had as of late. They all had the same, old woman in them, and they all had some dragon coming after him. Had the gods unleashed Loki to torment him in his dreams?

"Hiccup?" Astrid voice broke him out of thoughts. He looked up to see her standing behind beside him, buckling her belt of skull heads around her waist. "Are you okay?"

"Whoâ€| me? Why wouldn't I be? I just don't feel like sleeping. That's all."

"Hiccup, I heard you scream. I'm surprised none of the other men in your cam woke up."

"It's nothing; I assure you."

"Hiccup, you are beyond exhausted. I can see the rings under your eyes. It looks like you've not slept in over a week. Tell me what's going on with you? Am I gonna get the truth from you, or am I gonna have to beat it out of you?"

"It's nothing, I promise you," Hiccup assured her. "I've just that I've been having a lot of nightmares lately."

"Nightmares? How long has this been going on?"

"A week or two," Hiccup shrugged.

"Does your father know?" Astrid could not believe that he was hiding something like this from everyone. He was wearing himself down, and if things did not improve, he could end up killing himself.

"No, and we're not gonna tell him." Hiccup stressed.

"Why?"

"Cause I don't want him to think that I can't handle the authority he's given me. You've got to promise meâ€¦ you won't tell him. I'll work things out on my own."

Astrid gave him a questionable look. She did not want to see him continue torturing himself. If there was a problem, she much rather have it out in the open, so he could deal with it; However, she understood why he did not want to tell his father. He wanted to prove himself as the future Viking chief of the tribe of Berk. "Okay, I won't say anything."

Hiccup smiled and stood up onto his feet. Astrid did the same, happy to see him willing to try again to get some sleep. "I won't say anything, but you better work this out soon."

She gently shoved Hiccup, but due to the instability of sand, his artificial foot sunk into the sand, causing him to stumble. Unable to regain his footing, he fell onto the sand.

Astrid had a brief micro expression of concern, having not meant to knock him over, but knowing that he was not hurt, she put on a devilish smile. She turned and slowly walked back to her camp, very much in a flaunting manner.

* * *

><p>The old women observed the conversation of the two young Vikings from among the shadows of the forest. Leaning on her walking stick, she began her task to study and learn everything she could about the boy named Hiccup the Horrendous for the next few days. She had successfully lured Berk's Vikings to the island, and disposed of two of their three ships. They were as good as stranded, and if all continued to go as planned, a good number of the adult Vikings will be sent away, further decreasing their numbers. The only Viking who mattered was the Viking Chief's son.<p>

Studying this interaction, she knew that this little Viking girl was close to him. She determined that she was either betrothed to the young Viking prince or his girlfriend, depending on the traditions of their tribe. Knowing this would come in very handy to bring the boy down to his knees.

* * *

><p>Hiccup was the last one to wake up; and when he did, his body strongly protested. The few hours of sleep he did get did nothing to help ease the fatigue he was feeling. He could still feel the effects of last night's nightmare.<p>

Everyone was up and about at the camps. His friends were surrounding his father and Gobber who had pulled out a map to determine where they could be. Hiccup went to join them. As he approached, Astrid gave him another concerned look as to tell him that this was, yet, another reason why he should tell his father.

"From what I can tell, this was where we were when the storm hit us. If I'm correct, we can only be on one of these two islands. The Killagain tribe is on the Island on the West, just East of the Visitnug Territory."

"This is not that island," Bitwolf said. He knew this island better than anyone since the Killagain tribe had been his home up to a season ago. "Our island does not have a volcano."

Stoick glanced up at the mountain top over the tree tops of the forest. The mountain was a good distance away, but it still had a very ill-favored look to it. "Then that leaves only one possibility." Stoick tapped his thick index finger on the map. "We're on this island: The Outcast Lands."

"The Outcast Lands?" Gobber's eyes filled with fear upon hearing those words. "We can't stay here; we've got to leave immediately! I've heard stories about this island that will scare your socks off."

Stoick sighed and shook his head. He knew he was going to regret asking him this next question. "What stories?"

"This island is cursed! Few Viking who dare set foot here ever left alive. Loki, himself, wouldn't dare set foot here; this island is haunted."

"And here we go again," Tuffnut rolled his eyes. Hiccup had talked all of them to go with Gobber on his quest to find a Boneknapper dragon. During that journey, he showered them with these ridiculous and farfetched stories of all of his previous encounters with the dragon. He seemed to have a flair for the dramatic and exaggerating the truth. It looked like he was about to embark on another one of these annoying stories, something Tuffnut really wanted to avoid.

"Haunted?" Stoick tried his best not to laugh and mock his old friend, despite how hilarious his comments actually were. "There's no such thing as spooks, or demons. This Island is not haunted."

"Oh really?" Gobber said with a challenging tone to his voice. "There's no such thing as spooks just like there's no such thing as a Boneknapper dragon, huh? Think about it: the dragons' strange behavior and the crazy storm from nowhere. We've been bewitched!"

Stoick turned towards Bitwolf, hoping to get some sanity back into this conversation. "Your tribe probably knows more about this island than we do. What do you think?"

Bitwolf folded his arms in front of him, clearly not happy about the turn of events as of late. "We knew enough to stay away from this island. Too many strange occurrences happen near here. The Killagain tribe has lost several ships and crews simply by sailing too close to the island."

"Stranded on a haunted island? Our chances of survival just went down to forty-five percent," Fishlegs commented, with a sheer look of panic on his face.

"What is up with all these arbitrary numbers of yours?" Bitwolf snapped.

"Okay, enough of this superstitious talk," Stoick had to regain control of this conference before they further got off topic. "We

have only one ship remaining, and we have two dragons and nearly fifty Vikings present. We cannot leave this island with just one ship. I want the crew of the last ship to set sail West for the Killagain tribe, and bring the Monstrous Nightmare with you. The rest of us will remain here until you're able to bring a rescue party. As for those of us staying on this Island, Hiccup, Gobber, and I will be exploring the island to see if we can find help. With Odin's blessing, we may discover another Viking tribe that'll be willing to help. Everyone else will remain here and wait for the rescue party."

"Perhaps I should stay here at the camp, and make sure everything remains in tip-top shape!" Gobber suggested.

"You're coming with us," Stoick replied dryly.

7. Chapter 7

Chapter 7

With their only ship now on the way to the Killagain tribe, Stoick and Hiccup lead the journey through the thick jungles of the Outcast Lands. Toothless was enjoying the journey more than anyone; he always had been an inquisitive dragon.

Gobber was with the group, but he was anything but thrilled about exploring this 'forsaken land'. He also seemed to have gotten Fishlegs all wound up tight in nervousness. The young Viking was always quick to believe what anyone says to him, and that had a tendency to be just as annoying as Gobber's tall tales. Easily provoked by his comments was Bitwolf. It was not that he did not like Fishlegs; he just didn't like cowards. Ruffnut and Tuffnut were too busy finding new ways to start a fight between themselves to care about anything else around them. Astrid, on a very thin fuse as of late, was doing her best not to snap at any of them, especially Bitwolf. There was a part of her that had trouble letting go of the things he did to her and her friends. She seemed more in control as long as Hiccup was nearby.

Snotlout seemed more excited about exploring the island than everyone else. He and Tuffnut were the ones that least believed in Gobber's superstitious stories. Together, they usually found trouble; either that, or trouble found them. "I was hoping to see some exciting new dragons on this island. Where are they all?"

"They're probably hiding from your ugly face," Tuffnut chuckled, poking his sister with his elbow.

She did not dignify him with an angry glare. Instead, her arm sprung out and delivered a painful jab into his jaw. "Umph!" Tuffnut grumbled under his breath as he rubbed his jaw.

"You know, there's a story that all the dragons on this island were killed off by some horrific monster that no one has ever seen," Gobber commented.

Fishlegs eyes were filled with terror. He snapped a look all around him to make sure that there was nothing hiding around them. "Maâ€"ma-
gulp monsther?"

"Perhaps the island's deserted?" Astrid suggested, ignoring this crazy talk. She was not going to give any credence to Gobber's crazy ghost stories.

"I would have to say no, it's not," Stoick replied, as he stopped walking. In front of him, there was a pole sticking up from the ground. Hanging on the pole was a human skull wearing a Viking hat.

"Wow, freaky!" Ruffnut said.

"It's a sign," Gobber replied. "It's a warning not to proceed any farther cause this island is cursed!"

"That's enough of that kind of talk," Stoick interrupted. "This is a sign, but only that there are others people on this island."

"Yeah, but are they the kind that we want to meet," Hiccup added. "Gobber is right about one thing; this is a warning for us to stay out."

"But is it because the natives are unfriendly, or because we're entering a deadly part of the island?" Astrid added.

"Maybe it's because there's a fierce dragon living around here?" Snotlout added. "We should check it out."

"Stranded on a mysterious, haunted island with a warning to keep out. Chances of survival now down to forty percent, if anyone cares." Fishlegs commented.

"There's nothing more to discuss," Stock said firmly. These ghost stories of Gobber were making everyone crazy. They were making everyone forget that they had a mission to save Berk. For him, his immediate mission was to save and keep his people alive. The problem was that he was leading a group of young kids, who were starting to drive him crazy. Gobber was not helping things any by acting like a kid, himself. He could hardly wait until he was around grownups again. "We're going on; end of discussion."

Hiccup shrugged. "What's the worst that can happen?"

* * *

><p>As they journeyed beyond the skull, they ended up entering a foggy marsh land. It was an odd place to find for a swamp, and Stoick had to put his foot down, immediately, about any further talk on this haunted island business. However, that did not stop Fishlegs from giving his danger outlook report. "Poor visibility on a haunted island: I'd say our chances of survival are currently at ten percent."<p>

"Will you cut it out with that!" Bitwolf snapped.

"I hate to admit it, but I don't like this either," Astrid admitted. "Who knows what dragons may be lurking in here."

"That's why we have Toothless. He can smell danger before we run into it." Hiccup replied, patting the dragon on the neck. Toothless rawred

chipperly in reply.

"Caaaamiiiiicaaaaaziiiiii!" A soft feminine whispered gently tickled through the fog. It was not an intimidating voice; on the contrary, it sounded like the owner of voice was searching for this person named Camicazi.

"What was that?" Astrid asked.

Stoick held up his hand to signal the group to stop where they were. "Is someone out there? Show yourself!"

"Camicazi?" The female voice responded. It was a very awkward response to Stoick's question, if it even was a reply. "Caaaamiiiiicaaaaaziiiiii!"

"I'm officially creeped out now!" Fishlegs said, hunching his back slightly as he looked all around him, expecting something to attack them at any moment.

Toothless sniffed the air and growled, but even he had trouble pinpointing the location of the voice. The swamped just took this strange voice and echoed it in all directions. It could be coming from behind them, for all they knew.

"Uhâ€" hello? Can you understand me?" Hiccup tried his turn to talk to the voice, hoping a softer tone voice would get better results.

There was a long period of silence in there air before the voice returned. "Camicazi! Camicazi! Camicazi!"

"I keep telling you, this island is haunted! We're being bewitched!" Gobber said. Here was, yet, another sign that he was telling the truth, about this island. What would it take to convince Stoick that this island was pure evil?

"This is really creepy," Tuffnut said.

"Ignore it," Stoick told the young Vikings. "Let's work our way out of here." Stoick continued to trek through the swamp. Everyone else followed as none of them wanted to stay there as long as they had to.

Astrid leaned to her left to whisper something to Hiccup. "You don't suppose that Gobber may beâ€| rightâ€| about this island?"

Hiccup hated to put Gobber down; he respected him greatly. When everyone thought Gobber was crazy when he believed that a Boneknapper was trying to kill him, Hiccup stood by him. The elder Viking had done so much for him, that he hated to turn his back on him, but he just could not believe that this island was haunted by ghosts. "Uhâ€| it's possible that someone might want us to think so, but I think there a logical explanation for all of this."

* * *

><p>The old witch stood on a ridge, overlooking the foggy marsh lands. She did not need her eyes to see where they were and what they were doing. They were doing exactly as she had expected and wanted.

The chief had sent out a ship from the island, limiting the number of Vikings on the island. Further limiting the numbers, he took a small group to explore the island. She did not care about anyone in this group except for the chief's son. She had no doubt that he would bring him along, as well as the Night Fury.<p>

However, there was, now, one unforeseen circumstance that had developed. 'She' had found the Vikings and was following them. The witch had not expected her to be so bold to follow strange new Vikings whom she had never seen before. As unforeseen as this was, it could prove to be a much welcomed surprise for her son. Hiccup could end up becoming the key to bringing 'her' back to the village to meet her fate. She could end up becoming a very tasty treat for the Furious. The witch would have to see how things continued to unfold, but this was turning out better than she had hopes; praise be to the giants for their favor upon her.

* * *

><p>They made it through the other side of the marsh. That eerie voice had not been heard from again since the first time they heard it. Now that their visibility had returned, everyone's nerves were returning to normal. Stoick even afford them time to sit down and rest.<p>

Fishlegs sat on the trunk of a fallen tree. Breathing heavily, he was happy to be able to sit down and catch a breather. "Okay, our chances are nowâ€|"

"Finish that sentence, and I'm gonna hurt you!" Bitwolf growled, waving a fist in his face.

His eyes followed the movement of Bitwolf's fist. "Fifty-five." He managed to blurt out despite the threat.

"This is crazy! We've not run into any dragon since arriving to this island," Snotlout complained, as he sat on the ground and leaned back into a tree trunk.

"Yeah, there hasn't been as much as a single Terrible Terror. What kind of island is this?" Tuffnut agreed.

"They've got a point," Astrid added. "This island is easily capable of sustaining life. So why haven't we come across any?"

"Caaaaamiiiiicaaaazeeee!" The eerie voice returned to taunt them and to test their nerves.

"It's baaaaack," Ruffnut said, matching the ghostly tone of the voice.

"Ugh, I'm getting too old for this. My heart can't handle much more of this," Gobber complained.

Stoick held his new hammer up in front of him. After losing his hammer in the fight against the Sea Devils, he grabbed a new one from the last reaming ship, before it took off to the Killagain tribe. "Show yourself!"

The voice let out a soft, playful giggle. "Camicazi!"

"Grrrrr! That's really starting to get on my nerves!" Astrid growled.

Toothless let out a curious moan as he took a step forward. Hiccup noticed him staring at something up the hill ahead. The Night Fury was not the only one to see something. "Hey, look!" Snotlout announced.

Everyone looked up to see something standing there looking at them and hiding in the cover of shadow. There was no mistaking the shape of the figure; it was a small dragon that was looking curiously down at them. If Hiccup had to guess, it appeared about the same size as Toothless.

"What is it?" Tuffnut asked. Some dragon breeds were easily identified by the shapes of their body, but he could not identify this one as easily. He had never seen this type of dragon before.

"Do you suppose it's aggressive?" Bitwolf asked, hoping to finally be able to see some combat action.

"I don't think so," Hiccup replied. "It would've attacked us by now. I think it's just curious?"

Hiccup cautiously started to walk up the hill, showing the palms of his hands to show that he had no weapons in hand. The dragon instantly grew nervous and disappeared before he was able to get close. It happened so fast, he could not tell if the dragon had run or flown off. Disappointed, Hiccup could only look back at everyone and shrug.

8. Chapter 8

Chapter 8

The witch observed things unfold from a safe distance. She was curious to see that the dragon had yet to make contact with the Vikings. Perhaps, there was still a level of distrust in the dragon than she had supposed. However, the dragon's distrust was not enough to resolve her curiosity.

A large male Viking hid in the shadows as he approached the witch. "How's our guests doing?"

"They're well on their way, but we have an interesting development."

"What is it, old woman?"

"The dragon is watching them. She seems to be... curious... about the strangers."

"You meanâ€¦| "

"Yes, it's her. She seems to be overcoming her fear to study these Vikings."

"It's probably because of the boy. Hiccup the Horrendous has a way with dragons," The Viking replied. "Let's see if we can get the dragon to reveal itself to them."

The witch knew what he wanted from her; he was her son, after all, even if he refused to accept the fact. Her son did not believe much of anything, whether it be in the gods, or in the giants, whom she served. He held to no spiritual beliefs whatsoever; only hatred for the Roman Empire kept him going. Hiccup the Horrendous and the Vikings of the Berk were the key to bringing the Romans to their knees.

She raised her walking sticks into the air and began her chant. The large Viking stepped in front of her, interrupting her spell before she could get too far. "Oh, and I don't need to remind you that I don't want Hiccup the Horrendous harmed. The others areâ€¦ expendable."

* * *

><p>"Okay, everyone on your feet; rest time's over!" Stoick announced.<p>

All the young Vikings stood to their feet. It was a little harder for Hiccup with his artificial foot to get up. The moment he tried to stand up, the wooden frame cracked. "Just great!" He was hoping that the leg would hold up until he got back home to Berk, but that was not going to happen.

Astrid saw the situation with his leg and offered him her hand. "Need a hand?"

"Thanks," He said, taking her hand.

She helped him up onto his feet, releasing the strain on wooden frame. "Are you gonna be able to walk?"

"It should be fine to walk on, for now," Hiccup replied, trying to convince himself more than her. In actuality, he had no idea how much more it was going to be able to last.

Toothless stood up, when he saw everyone else standing up. An unexpected noise caused his ears to twitch. The dragon sniffed the air and smelt danger coming towards them at an alarming rate. He stiffened his body, bore his teeth, and growled in the direction the smell was coming from.

"What's wrong with him? Tuffnut asked.

"There's danger nearby?" Hiccup scouted the area intently, knowing that Toothless was never wrong about these kinds of things. The dragon had a very sharp sense of smell.

Stoick already had his ax in hand, knowing Toothless almost as well as his son. He knew this was a possibility, but after having that long stretch of calmness, he had hoped it would have stayed that way. Yes, these kids had proven themselves in grave situations, but they did not have their dragons this time. They still needed much more practice when it came to handling weapons. Astrid and Bitwolf were

probably the only ones who were competent enough to use their weapons. As for Hiccupâ€¦ that went without saying.

Stoick stepped out and focused his vision through the forest, trying to see anything that could be lurking. Lunging at him from a bush was a wild beast, unlike anything he had ever seen. He used the handle of his ax to hold the beast back by pressing it into its throat. The beast snapped wildly at his face. It had large jagged teeth and a lizard-like forked tongue. The creepy thing was: the beast had no eyes.

Stoick gritted his teeth as he used the handle of his ax to throw the four-legged creature to the ground. Now, with a better view of the monster, he could see that it was a dragon class creature, but with no wings. Its lower jaw and belly were black while the rest of his scaly-hide was purple. Tiny horns went down from its head all the way down to the tip of its tail. Four more of these creatures came out of the forest, and pranced around the group of Viking.

"Skullions!" Bitwolf snarled as he kept his doubled-headed ax in front of him. "These pack animals are predators through-and-through. They cannot see or hear, but they've got a very keen sense of smell. They have one extended claw on both of their front paws which they use to slash the tendons in the legs of their prey. Once they fall to the ground, they eat them alive."

"I don't have a good feeling about this," Fishlegs moaned.

A Skullion lunged at Toothless, but the dragon swung his tale, hitting the beast several feet away. Another one ventured to stalk him, but all he had to do to make the creature reconsider was to breathe a puff of flames in its direction.

"Let's do this, Toothless," Hiccup said reaching for the saddle.

Before he had the chance to climb up, a Skullion pounced on top of him, pinning his shoulders to the ground. Its extended claw on each foot came within inches of both of his ears. Hiccup looked up into the creature face. It's drool dripped from between its pointy teeth. Since it was unable to see, it smelled him to confirm that it had its pray pinned to the ground.

Before it had the chance to begin feeding, Toothless grabbed the nap of its neck with his jaws; his muffled, furious growls made it abundantly clear that he was enraged. With the snap of his neck, the Night Fury slammed the Skullion into the trunk of a tree. It let out a loud yelp, and desperately crawled away from the dragon.

Snotlout was keeping the monsters away with a large hammer. Any Skullion that dared tried for his ankles got a whack in the head. Bitwolf screamed like a rabid dragon as he charged at one of the beasts. He swung his ax wildly, that no creature would dare to consider a frontal assault on him.

A lone Skullion came leaping out of the forest, behind the Vikings. Astrid barley had the time to duck under the lunge, but the creature ended up knocking the ax out of her hands and out of her reach. She had no choice but to risk breaking from the group and retrieve her weapon.

The only advantage they had over the pack of Skullions was that they were keeping together. While grouped together, it made it difficult for predators to kill them. That was why beasts like the Skullions tended to try to disperse them, so they could pick-off a weaker, more susceptible prey. Of course, without a weapon to defend herself with, she was already in grave danger.

She took off for her weapon, hoping to get it and get back before they caught her. It was only after she gotten her weapon back in hand, that she realized the beasts had done this all intentionally; she had fallen for a trap. Five new beasts leaped from their hiding places, nearly knocking Hiccup and Snotlout to the ground in the process, and attacked Astrid.

"Hiya!" Astrid swung her ax, aggressively, in front of her. The attack only served as a delay attack, and it even made things worse for her, causing them to start to spread around her. She could not let them completely surround her, or she was as good as dead.

She ran into the forest as fast as she could, as the five Skullions chased after her. "Astrid!" Hiccup shouted, wanting to come to her rescue, but it was taking. Toothless everything he had to keep him safe. The monsters were doing everything to prevent him from having the time to climb up onto his dragon's back. More Skullions had joined the fight, and there were now eight of them encircling the group of Vikings.

Astrid dashed through the woods, dodging trees until she accidentally tripped on a rock sticking out of the ground. She rushed to get back onto her feet, but by then, it was already too late. The beasts had fully surrounded her.

They circled around her, preparing themselves for the kill. With Astrid's nerves on full alert, she kept the blade of her ax in front her, looking in all directions for the first beast to make its move. She was ready to go down fighting; if she had to die, she was going to take as many of them with her as she could. Yet, there was still a tiny part of her that prayed to Odin or Thor to help her survive this.

The dragon-like monsters could wait no longer. The first Skullion lunged for her only to have a dragon come out of nowhere and stomp him into the ground. The dark-blue dragon lifted her paw and swatted the struggling beast away. From that point on, the dragon had the full attention of five of the lizard-beasts.

Astrid stood there, frozen in-place with confusion and terror. She had no idea what this dragon's intentions were, or where it came from; but there was always the possibility that it may be coming for her next. She watched as the dragon, which looked slightly bigger than Toothless, take on all five creatures.

A Skullion leaped for the dragon's throat, but it raised its right, sharp claw and not only swatted it way, but left deep gashes down its rib cage. The dragon stared down at the beasts with curled lips and bared fangs. It let out a terrifying roar out of extreme anger.

The dragon unleashed a massive blanket of flames at the smaller beasts, causing them to scatter to a safe distance. One of them

managed to sneak close to the dragon's left ankle, and it used one of its extended claw to slash it.

The dragon roared in pain, and reacted violently towards the foolish beast who slashed at its ankle. It snapped at the Skullion, grabbing it by the back, wither her teeth. It hoisted its neck up and lifted the defenseless beast high off the ground. With a whip of its long, extended neck, it threw the beast deep within the forest.

One of the Skullions made a defeated sounding howl. The four others heard the cry of their alpha, and obeyed. They retreated into the forest, in search for easier pray.

The dragon posed ready for more battle if the call of retreat proved to be a trick. When the beasts disappeared within the forest, it realized that this was no trick; they had given up. The dragon turned to face Astrid, still growling as it stepped towards her.

Astrid was terrified, and did not know what to do. The very dragon that took on five Skullions was now setting its sight on her. She contemplated whether it was sound strategy to attack first or let the dragon make its move. A year ago, she would not think twice about attacking first, but she had come to learn a lot about dragons, thanks to Hiccup.

Deciding not to provoke the dragon, she waited to see what the it would do. It came up to her cautiously until it was at lunging distance. Instead of attacking, she closed her mouth, sat on its hind legs and tilted its head curiously. The dragon smacked her mouth around as if it had a bad taste in her mouth. When on all fours, the dragon was only a little bigger than Toothless, but sitting on its hind legs, the dragon appeared very tall; she, barley, came up to its chest. The structure of the dragon's face made it almost obvious that the dragon was female.

Before her very eyes, the dragon's scales began to change colors from a dark blue to a golden-yellow. The dragon looked down at her with a friendly curiosity. What kind of dragon was this?

* * *

><p>At one second, Hiccup and the others were fighting for their lives, and in the next, the Skullions were retreating back into the forest. All the Vikings were looking at each other with bewilderment, but Hiccup was more worried about Astrid.<p>

"Astrid!" Hiccup ran in the direction where he had seen Astrid run; Toothless followed closely behind.

"Hiccup?" He could hear his father's concern for his running from the group, but the only thing that mattered to him was to find Astrid and help if there was still time.

"Astrid?" Hiccup called out, praying to the gods that she was still alive.

"Over here," her voice answered back, not too far up ahead.

A heavy burden instantly lifted from his shoulders the moment that he heard her voice; she was still alive. He ran in the direction her

voice had been, and found her standing there with her ax on the ground. Sitting there in front of her was a good-sized golden dragon. "Uhâ€" what's this?"

"I think she's friendly," Astrid replied, still not willing to take the chance and go to pet the dragon, yet.

Toothless stood beside Hiccup and became immediately curious about the dragon. The fact that he had not growled or sensed danger told him that the dragon did seem to be friendly. When the other Vikings caught up to Hiccup and Toothless, they were quickly entranced by the docile dragon sitting in front of Astrid, as well. The dragon looked at all of them, including Toothless, and remained passive, as if it already knew that it could trust all of them.

"What kind of dragon is that?" Snotlout asked, not expecting anyone to really know.

"I've never seen a dragon like this before," Bitwolf replied, perplexed by this beautiful dragon in front of them.

"I'm a Mood dragon."

The shock and awe on everyone's faces could not be any more apparent. That feminine voice came from the dragon's mouth. "Did that dragon just talk?" Tuffnut finally managed to speak first through the shock he was experiencing.

The golden dragon stood up on all four legs and looked directly at Tuffnut, who had asked the question. "Yes, I can speak Norse as well as Dragoneese." The dragon looked towards Astrid. "I'm Stormfly."

9. Chapter 9

Chapter 9

"I'm totally freaking out now," Fishlegs exclaimed, now more convinced than ever that Gobber's stories about the island were true.

"How is this possible?" Stoick asked, baffled by this development. He could not imagine how it was possible that a dragon was capable of speaking their language. It was almost enough to shake his nerves and begin taking his friend's warnings with a little more hedence.

"You saved me. Why?" Astrid asked.

"I was just roaming around when I saw you in danger," Stormfly replied, but no longer were those words out of the dragon's mouth when her skin and scales turned to violate.

Everyone gasped in awe when they saw the dragon change color. It was rare to see a dragon with the capability to change colors, especially one that can talk. As for Astrid, she found it odder that the dragon changed color right after that comment. What kind of emotion was behind those words? She already saw Stormfly turn dark blue when displaying anger or aggression, so she knew that the dragon was not

angry. She acknowledged that she knew nothing about the dragon, but she began to wonder if the dragon's negative feelings made the dragon change to a dark color. Was the dragon lying? Deception was the only emotion she could think of, which made sense after being given a response like that.

Stormfly noticed her look of disbelief and then looked down at the scales of her front right leg. When she saw that her color had changed, she shook her body and focused on changing back to her normal color.

"You were following us, weren't you?" Astrid eyes her suspiciously.

"Me? No, I wasn't," She defended, but the dragon again turned purple.

"You're lying!" Astrid said, not in an accusing manner, but more of a surprised, revelatory manner. "You turn violate every time you tell a lie."

The golden dragon drooped her head, as her skin and scales slowly turned pink. "I was curious about you, Camicazi!"

"Waitâ€¦ what?" Snotlout interrupted. "You're that creepy voice that's been hounding us?"

"Who's Camicazi?" Hiccup asked.

Stormfly returned to her normal golden color as she looked in Astrid's direction. "She's Camicazi!"

"Me? I think you've got me mixed up with somebody else; my name's not Camicazi."

"I want to help you, Camicazi, and your friends. This island is full of danger."

"Are there any humans on this island? We're stranded here with no way to get back home." Stoick asked. If this dragon was capable of speaking in Norse, then there had to be other humans on this island from whom she had learned from.

Stormfly hesitated for a second before answering the question. "I will bring you to someone who could possibly help."

The Viking's nerves were eased when the dragon kept her natural color; but that did not mean that they could trust the dragon. That was why all eyes went towards Hiccup for the final decision. "I guess it couldn't hurt, since she does know the island better than we do."

* * *

><p>As their journey continued deeper into the island, Stormfly seemed to tag behind Astrid intensely. For some reason, the Mood dragon was taking much more interest in her than anyone else. It appeared that she was completely sold on Astrid being this Camicazi person. Hiccup could not help but wonder if this dragon belonged to Camicazi, and if Astrid was a splitting image of her. It would

explain the dragon's infatuation with her.<p>

The mood dragon was not the only curious dragon among them. Toothless took an interest into Stormfly. Frequently, he would take a look over at the other dragon. Hiccup could not help but notice how many times his dragon stole glances in her direction. He also noticed that the Night Fury was casually falling more and more behind. If he didn't know better, he would have sworn that Toothless was slyly trying to wind up walking next to her.

He finally accomplished just that, and was now walking beside Stormfly. She looked curiously at him as he let out a series of moans and grunts. She smiled at the Night Fury and let out a flirtatious laugh. "You're cute."

Upon hearing those words, Toothless' legs failed him and he began to wobble around. His tongue flapped outside of his mouth as he acted like a Viking who had indulged in too much ale. Hiccup could not help but smile at his love-struck dragon.

Stormfly laughed as she watched the Night Furies reaction. Their moment of light-hearted fun came to an end, though, when they both smelled danger approaching. "Stop!" She yelled as her skin and scales turned to dark blue.

Toothless attitude quickly changed, as he also sensed the danger that was coming. He was growling by the time Hiccup got to him. "What's out there?"

Out of nowhere, a thin dart-like object flew past Hiccup's face and impaled itself into the ground.

"Poison Darters!" Stormfly growled.

"Raise your shields!" Stoick ordered.

The command came just in time, as ten more darts came flying at them from within the forests. All the darts were reflected, successfully, by their shields as ten small dragons came flying towards them. They were dark green in color and were about the size of a Gronkle. They almost looked like miniature Monstrous Nightmares in body structure.

"Keep your backs to the trees!" Stormfly instructed the Vikings. That would protect the Vikings from behind, and give the small dragons less opportunity for accomplishing a sneak attack. "Whatever you do, do not let one of those darts hit you; their poisonous! They may be less harmful to you larger Vikings; but to you little ones, they can be deadly!"

That last warning was for Hiccup, and he knew it, but he was not about to sit out and stay on the defense this time. He was determined to do something to help out. He quickly climbed up onto the saddle on Toothless' back.

"What are you doing?" Astrid asked in alarm. If those darts were as poison as the Mood dragon made it out, then Hiccup could easily be killed by one of them. He was the last one to be trying to take on these dragons.

"Toothless and I'll keep them distracted. You guys get ready if any of them decides not to follow."

"I'm going with you, little Viking," Stormfly replied, and then looked over towards Astrid. The golden dragon bent forward until her long neck touched the ground. "Care to ride with me, Camicazi?"

"My name is Astrid, not Camicazi!" she replied, finding being called 'Camicazi' very annoying. She took the dragon up on her offer, not willing to let Hiccup risk his life alone. He and Toothless would have a better chance with their help.

As she climbed onto Stormfly's back, Bitwolf ran out to join them. "I'm coming too. You'll need as much help taking those beasts down as you can get."

Stormfly did not object. While she had nothing against the other Vikings, she was more concerned for the female Viking's safety. The only way she could assure her safety while fighting off the Poison Darters were to have her on her back. She was willing for the taller young Viking to also ride with her, mostly because it would protect Camicazi from the rear. The dragon had no doubt that the male Viking would not be as at-risk from a poison dart as the girl.

With his ax in hand, Bitwolf climbed onto Stormfly's back, sitting right behind Astrid. "Are you sure about this?" He asked Astrid. "This dragon's still wild, after all."

"Of course I'm wild," Stormfly said with a little annoyance behind her voice. "And don't you forget it!"

The two dragons took to the sky, with Toothless leading the way. They pushed through the thick forest towards the open sky above. Bitwolf looked behind them to see a couple of the small dragons in pursuit. As they continued to fly upwards, others came out of hiding to join them.

The lead Darter opened its mouth and fired a poisonous dart. Bitwolf was barely able to get the head of his ax in front of his face to reflect it away. "That was close!"

"Let's see if we can get some of them to follow us," Astrid said, leaning forward in anticipation of some slick flying.

"You read my mind," Stormfly replied with a grin.

The dragon took a sharp right before reaching the open sky. Astrid looked back to see if they had succeeded in getting some of them to follow. From a quick look back, it looked like they had gotten the attention of three or four of them.

"Hold on tightly!" Stormfly warned.

Astrid leaned forward and held firmly to the dragon's neck. Bitwolf had no choice but to hold on tightly onto her as the dragon began her speedily swerves around trees. The pursuing Poison Darters dodged all the trees as well, keeping up with the Mood dragon with incredible speed and swiftness.

The small dragons fired a series of poison darts at them, but

Stormfly avoided them by dodging around a large tree. The Darters continued their chase, firing darts as they did.

The Mood dragon tried a new tactic to cause confusion among the small dragons. She retracted her wings as far as she could and spun rapidly in mid-air. She was able to narrowly avoid a few darts thanks to her spinning and twisting around.

"I think I'm gonna throw up!" Bitwolf complained. Astrid may be used to flying on the back of dragons, but he wasn't. His eyes could not hold a single image in all the blur, and his body was starting to protest.

Stormfly ceased her spinning and spread out her wings before gravity was able to pull them back towards the ground. Gliding through the forest, it took a minute for the world to stop spinning for Bitwolf. Once his head did clear, he looked back to see the angry Darters still on their tail. He looked straight ahead, and an idea formed in his mind. "Fly as close as you can to that branch, up ahead."

Stormfly grunted an affirmative response, and positioned herself to swoop right underneath the branch that the male Viking pointed out. Bitwolf raised his ax, hoping he could muster enough strength in his arms without having a steady foothold.

The dragon raced towards the branch, and flew dangerously close to it. She was almost scared that the girl would crash into it. Bitwolf threw his ax and bent forward, in anticipation of the branch break from the tree.

The blade of the ax cut through the branch, just as Stormfly flew underneath it. The Poisonous Darters could not avoid flying into the branch. The branch, itself, was not enough to take out the dragons, but it disoriented the dragons enough to have one to crash into the tree trunks, and the others to crash into each other.

The dragons struggled to recollect themselves. Seeing the disarray among them, Stormfly decided to take advantage of it. She flew around the large tree and sped right towards the dragons. Unleashing a breath of flames, she scattered the treacherous little dragons.

* * *

><p>There were more Poisonous Darters than it first appeared. Stoick, Gobber, and the young Vikings were fending off three more dragons. Gobber used his shield to save himself from a dart, while using his hammer prosthesis to attack one of the dragons. Stoick was in the middle of a wrestling match with one of them. He used one of his giant hands to keep the dragon's mouth shut while he used the other one to deliver some body blows. "Wretched little dragons!<p>

"Just like the good ol' days, ain't it!" Gobber said after another swing of his hammer.

Stoick did not reply. It had been a long time since he had wrestled with a dragon, but it was not as enjoyable as it once was. He no longer saw these beasts as a menace than needed to be exterminated. He saw them as normal animals who share the world they lived in. They were not the blood-thirsty demons from Helheim as and his people once

supposed, but creatures who could reason, for the most part.

He looked up through the tree tops to see shadows flying in the sky. Hiccup was taking on a group of those Poisonous Darters up there. He could not help and worry about his son. Yes, he's taken on more ferocious beasts before, but that did not stop him being concerned.

* * *

><p>Once Toothless was above the trees, the advantage was solely theirs. Toothless was the master of blending into his environment and coming out of nowhere for a sneak attack. Hiccup did not even have to give any commands; the Night Fury was in his element, or so he thought.<p>

The Poison Darters proved to be very stubborn animals. Even though Toothless was clearly faster than them, they were not going to give up their pursuit. "They're not getting the hint. Let's try to scare them off."

Toothless grunted and nodded his head. With the press of the pedal, they made sharp turnaround, with the dragaon's wing-tips slicing the air currents with swift precisian. Now gliding straight for the group of darters, Toothless coughed out blue flames, which took the shape of a shockwave. The point was not to kill the animals, just to scare them off.

The burning shockwave disrupted the darter's flight pattern and caused disarray among them. Toothless flying though them made the dragons even more disoriented.

Up ahead, he could see Stormfly, with Astrid and Bitwolf, rising above the trees and on their way up to where the action was. Hiccup was glad to see that they were alright. He saw them fly off in a different direction, taking a few of the dragons with them. It was great to know that Stormfly was a great flyer; he had his reservation about Astrid riding on a strange and wild dragon, whom they had just met.

"Hiccup, behind you!" Astrid shouted, still from a long distance away.

Barley loud enough for him to hear, Hiccup did as warned, only to find a twig-like poisonous dart fly across his line of site. A couple darters had started to chase after him again. "Let's see how fast they can go!"

Hiccup leaned forward, and pressed his prosthetic foot down on the pedal. Toothless put more strength into each flap of his wings, and pushed himself to go as fast as he could. Slowly, the Poisonous Darters were starting to fall behind. He was surprised that they had not left them in the dust. Those darters were proving to be very speedy dragons after all.

Stormfly flew upwards, heading straight for the darters that were chasing Hiccup and Toothless. As soon as they were in reach, she unleashed her fiery breath, and scattered the last remaining dragons away. The Poison Darters all retreated from the battle; two speedy dragons were more than a match for them.

"Well, that was close," Hiccup said, relieved that this threat was now over. He rolled his right shoulder around to get the stiffness out, but the strange sensation that he was feeling was only increasing.

He reached across his own chest with his left arm, and used his hand to rub the back of his right shoulder. That was when he felt something out of the ordinary. Something was sticking out of his brown-fur vest. He used two fingers to grab hold of it and gave it a gentle yank. It was only after he pulled it out when he realized that it had punctured through his clothes and his skin. There was a quick flash of pain as if a large splinter was quickly pulled out of his skin. He looked at what he had pulled out, and was shocked to see one of the darts from the Poisonous Darters in his hand. "Oh, this is not good!"

Everything began to grow blurry and every part of his body began to go numb. It felt like millions of pins and needles pricking every spare inch of his body at the same time. His motor functions started to go as he became too weak to sit up. He fell forward, onto Toothless' neck, which unintentionally caused his prosthesis to lighten up on the pedal.

Toothless grunted in alarm, as his ability to stay in flight became seriously hampered. His artificial tail-fin was open just enough to soften their out-of-control descent; instead of taking a sharp nose dive, they were gliding down towards the treetop.

"Hiccup!" It took her almost a minute to realize what was happening. "They're in trouble. We've got to go help them!" She said, patting Stormfly on the neck.

"Hold on, Toothless!" Stormfly shouted making a sudden stop in mid-air, and a quick spin-around. She raced as fast as she could to catch up to Toothless.

The Night Fury was crying in alarm, unable to do anything to save himself; Hiccup's foot was positioned on the pedal making it near impossible for the dragon to safely land on his own. Stormfly glided beside Toothless. "Hiccup, wake up!" Astrid shouted.

"It's no use, he's been hit by a poisonous dart!" Stormfly replied. "Someone's gonna have to jump onto Toothless' back and fly them down to safety."

"I guess that's gonna have to be me," Astrid replied

"No, I'll do it!" Bitwolf replied. "Hold my ax for me."

"Someone do something quick! The little Viking is slipping off!"

Stormfly did her best to steady herself as Bitwolf awkwardly positioned himself to leap off the back of the dragon. It proved to be a very difficult and daunting task; he never imagined himself ever doing anything this insane in his life.

Toothless tried his best to keep Hiccup from sliding off, but a sudden gust of wind caused him to lose his balance. Hiccup's body

slid off the saddle, with his artificial foot still locked into the pedal. The strain from gravity proved too much for the already weak wooden leg, and the wood snapped.

"Hiccup!" Astrid screamed, helpless only to watch him plummet towards the tree tops.

"You've got to jump now!" Stormfly told the tall young Viking preparing to jump off her back.

Finding the nerves to throw caution to the wind, he leaped off her back and landed onto the saddle on Toothless' back. He quickly settled in, but found that a very big problem; the metal portion of Hiccup's prosthesis was still stuck in the pedal. He had to find a way to get it out before they crashed into the ground.

With Bitwolf safely on the Night Fury's back, Stormfly was free to go. "Hold on tightly, Camicazi!"

"My name is not Camicaaaaaa!" Before she could finish her protest, the dragon began a nose dive in an attempt to save the little Viking. She grunted as she pushed herself as hard as she could. Just before reaching the tree tops, she pulled her neck back and reached out with her right claw and narrowly and gently grasped the Viking boy. She glided skillfully through the trees, and until she could land on her three remaining claws.

Bitwolf tried to kick the prosthesis fragment out of the pedal latch. "Okay, I know you don't like me any, but if you want to live, you're gonna have to trust me!"

Toothless reluctantly agreed, seeing that he had no other choice. Giving him the nod of approval, Bitwolf pulled out a pocket knife from his belt and carefully studied the design. He looked for the leather strap that connected the pedal to the artificial tail-fin. Holding the strap with one hand, he cut the strap between his hand and the pedal.

The strap snapped free, and with a hard pull on it, the tail-fin opened completely, giving the Night Fury back full control of his flight ability. He flew down through the tree tops and flew through the woods until he found Astrid and Stormfly. He swooped in, and made a perfectly smooth landing.

"Whew, that was close," Bitwolf said, breathing heavily.

He climbed off of the saddle and joined Astrid, who was trying everything in her power to get Hiccup to wake up. They were soon joined by Stoick and the rest of the gang.

"Hiccup!" Having seen what happened to his son up in the sky, he led Gobber and the rest of the young Vikings as fast as he could to where he saw the Mood dragon land. As soon as he got there, Astrid had to jump away to avoid Stoick, who swooped his son into arms. He placed an ear to his chest, hoping to still hear a heartbeat. "He's still alive, but his breathing is erratic."

"Is there something we can do for him?" Astrid turned to Stormfly.

"He's a small Viking. I don't know if he'll survive this or not, but there is something that we can try."

The crackle of thunder echoed all around them as a new wave of storm clouds started to make their way towards them. "Night is falling and a storm is approaching. There's a cave up ahead where we can take shelter. Then, I'll go find some berries that might help with the poison."

10. Chapter 10

Chapter 10

The clouds let loose just as they reached the cave. As they hunkered down in the shelter, Astrid and Stormfly went off to find some wild berries that would be used to make some medicine for Hiccup. By the time they were ready to leave, Hiccup had developed a fever, further complicating the situation. While the rest of the Vikings were setting up fire pits for them to keep warm for the night, she and the Mood dragon were scavenging through the forest in the pouring rain.

The rain was of no concern to her; she would brave any element to find these berries that would cure Hiccup. At first, she was surprised that she was allowed to go alone with the talking dragon. Did Stoick trust the dragon that much to allow her to go unaccompanied by another Viking? She surmised that he was too distracted with the situation of his son to consider all the options. Anyway, this lack of concentration erred in her favor; they had no one to slow them down. She only had to put up with the strange Mood dragon which seemed to have latched onto her.

Lightning streaked across the sky, seemingly trying to frighten them from their task. Stormfly acted as if she could hardly hear the storm all around them; even Astrid had to admit that the strength of this storm was unnerving. Berk had its fair share of thunderstorms, but nothing of this magnitude.

"How much farther is it? This isn't a trick, right?"

"We don't have much farther to go," Stormfly replied, her scales remaining the same color as she did. "We'll find your berries, Camicazi!"

"I've said it before, my name is not Camicazi," She replied.

The dragon either did not hear her response, or she was ignoring her. Either way, she had a feeling that trying to convince the dragon of her real name was going to be a pain in her neck. Just hearing that name was already starting to get her blood boiling. She had no idea why the dragon insisted in calling her this name, or what it meant, but she did not like it.

"Tell me the truth, is Hiccup going to die?"

"There's no telling. He's a small Viking; I've seen dragons his size killed by one of those darts, but he still lives. What he lacks in mass, he makes up for in spirit. The juice from these wild berries should aid him, but in the end, the fight to live is still his."

In a strange way, she found that a little encouraging. As they continued through the downpour, she decided to try to distract herself with different thoughts. "So, are there any other Mood dragons on the island?"

"Oh yeah, there's a whole heard of us here," the dragon replied. Her body immediately turned purple.

"Care to tell me the truth, now?" Astrid frowned.

The dragon sighed. "I'm the only one on the Island."

"How is that possible? You have to have a mother."

Stormfly changed colors once again, this time to a light green. The Dragon was trapped; that was a question she did not want to answer. She should have anticipated these types of questions when she decided to reveal herself to these Vikings. This question was only going to lead to more questions which she was just not ready to answer.

"Over there! The berries are over there!"

To the right, there was a single bush with bright-red berries growing from its branches. It was the only bush of its kind in the area. Astrid rushed over and ripped a large branch from the bush. "This should be enough. Let's get this branch back to the cave."

* * *

><p>Hiccup was running through the forest. With night fallen, the moon light provided barely enough light for his eyes to see any obstacles in his way. His heart raced in his chest, as his lungs worked hard to keep up with the strenuous labor of his running.<p>

He had no idea where he was running to, but he knew, perfectly well, what he was running from. Behind him, the forest was catching fire. The flames reached high above the tree tops. It took everything he had to outrun the flames that were doing everything in their power to reach out and grab hold of him.

As he ran, he came across an open field with a large open view of the night sky. After reaching the center of the field, he dared to take a breather and take a glance back. The burning trees were pushed aside by a large fiery hand, and stepping out from the forest was a giant made of fire. He stood as tall as the tallest tree in the forest, and stared down at him with his devilish black eyes. On the top of his head were two demonic horns, also made of fire.

All the signs around him warned him to run, but his brain was unable to communicate with his legs; fear had taken control of all of his senses. To say that the sight of this creature was horrific would be an understatement. A part of him believed in the gods and all the stories he learned over the years, but the more pragmatic side of him did not actually believe that the stories were real. Hearing Gobber's story of how Thor, himself, come to his aid during one of his earlier battles with the Boneknapper, was almost laughable. Seeing a Fire Giant right from his childhood stories made those stories not so funny anymore.

From the burning forest, now behind the Fire Giant, the familiar looking Seadragonus Giganticus Maximus stepped out and stood beside the giant. Like before, this one was bigger and uglier than Green Death and there was nothing left of its wings but the skeletal structure. It looked towards Hiccup with all six of its eyes. The fire giant treated the dragon as his pet, almost petting the dragon with his hand of flames.

Another giant stepped out of the part of the forest that had yet to catch fire. This second giant was of another breed. He was nearly see-through, with streaks of lightning flowing inside of him. If Hiccup remembered his stories correctly, he guessed that this new being was a Storm Giant.

He looked up in sheer terror at the two giants and the large dragon, which looked at him as if he was a piece of meat. The fire giant waved his hand to his right, urging the boy to look in that direction. When he did, he saw his father, Astrid, and everyone else that had journeyed across the island. All of them stood there, frozen in place like statues.

The dragon by the giant's side turned his focus on the group of Vikings, and without warning, it unleashed a devastating flow of flames. The flames roared like thunder, as they engulfed everything standing in its way. The billowy flames raced towards the Viking statues and quickly swallowed them up.

The storm giant pointed to his left, drawing Hiccup's attention towards that direction. He could see a giant map-like drawing of Berk. The entire village was swarming with over a hundred of dragons, of various species, as it was burning to the ground. The image of the map disappeared, and he found himself surrounded by a legion of dragons.

There was something familiar about these dragons; all of them were breeds that were found at Berk. In fact, these were the dragons from Berk, and all of them were staring down at him. It appeared that the giants were able to get the dragons to start a rebellion.

Standing in front of the giant's feet was the same strange-looking old woman. She held a hand-crafted walking stick at her side, as her pale, wrinkled face continued to show no sign of emotions. Somehow, she seemed to be the one responsible for everything he was seeing. That gut feeling changed, however, when he heard the sound of a deep laughter from the woods. A hefty, male figure was walking from the shadows of the trees. The manner that this man walked exhibited dignity and leadership.

Hiccup's nervous was so frayed that his stomach started to turn. He could not help to feel that it was important to see who this man was. He waited and watched as the man made his way into the light.

* * *

><p>Hiccup's eyes fluttered open, and found himself lying beside a fire pit. It was the last thing that he wanted right then; he was so hot as it was, that the heat from the fire was almost suffocating. His face was drenched with sweat that he would have sworn was boiling upon his burning forehead.<p>

His mind was reeling from the dream that he had just experienced. It felt very different from the nightmares that he had been experiencing lately. This one felt more like a warning, rather than a scary dream. It was unfortunate that he was awakened before he had the chance to see the face of the man. He had no idea what the dream meant, if anything, but he could not shake the feeling that it, and all the subsequent nightmares had some sort of meaning to them.

His head was spinning, making it impossible for his eyes to focus on anything. Through the mental fog, he thought he saw his friends surrounding another fire pit, boiling some kind of liquid. It looked like Stormfly were watching them intently or was she instructing them? Before he could determine, everything went dark once again.

* * *

><p>Somehow, he had known something had gone awry, and why wouldn't he? He was her son after all. "Tell me what happened, Witch?"<p>

"My sister's getting involved now," the old woman said, looking down the hill at the red glow coming from the entrance of the cave which was underneath them. "She was trying to warn the boy about you. Luckily, I intervened before that could happen."

"That woman is going to ruin everything!" The Viking barked bitterly. "I've done everything in my power to find her, but she's too good at hiding. What can you do to fix this?"

"I will plant another nightmare in him, and enforce what I've already started. He will sweep the dream away with all the other nightmares."

"Good. I think it's time to accelerate the plan to the next level. The boy will survive, won't he?"

"Yes, the boy is very resilient. The Mood dragon is instructing the Vikings of Berk on how to make the healing berry tea. The boy should be fine by the morning."

"Good," The Viking replied. "Of course, this rain is not helping matters any."

"You worry too much," The woman replied. "I have the ears of Byleist."

The Viking shrugged upon the last statement she made. "Byleist, Surtur, Odin, Thor or I don't believe in these superstitious myths. The only reason I tolerate such talk is that use of those names helps get me what I want."

"Don't mock the giants. I worship both Byleist the Storm Giant and Surtur the Fire Giant. Who's not to say that Surtur was not locked away in this very mountain by the gods?" She responded, pointing to the volcano with her staff. "How else do you think that I am able to control Furious, Surtur's pet dragon?"

Her son started to get frustrated with this discussion. "You 'claim' that the dragon belongs to this Fire Giant of yours. Just because you're my mother doesn't mean I will so openly accept your

superstitious ways as fact. As long as I get what I want, that's all I care about."

11. Chapter 11

Chapter 11

As the night progressed, Astrid was comforted to find that Hiccup's fever broke. Unluckily, after a few nightmares throughout the night, his father began to ask questions. Hiccup had still been too groggy to answer them and that left her being the one having to answer them. She had to tell him everything she knew.

It was late at night, and everyone was sleeping throughout the cave. Taking advantage of it, Astrid quietly slipped out of the cave. The storm had long passed, leaving a perfect view of the starry sky. Astrid was astonished how quickly the weather seemed to change on this island.

Astrid explored through the forest, but not too far away from the cave. The last thing she needed was to get lost, but she also needed some privacy. She walked as far away as she dared to, without losing sight of the cave through the trees. She found a large rock sticking up in the ground, and it was in a perfect spot for her to sit and gaze up at the stars. And that was what she did, feeling the need to calm her mind.

She wished to the gods that she was back there rather than on this forsaken island. This adventure was quickly becoming distasteful to say in the least. Never in her life had she felt so helpless. They were stuck on this island with no signs of human life anywhere, and with no way to leave. Yes, they had another ship racing to find help, but who's to say that something did not happen to them?

Ever since they left on this journey, it felt like everything that could go wrong did. It was as if the gods were against them. Stormfly said that she was taking them to find help, but Astrid was not sure if the dragon could be trusted. She was already proving to have a reputation of lying. The dragon was hiding something, and the young Viking warrior was going to find a way to find out what it was.

"Watcha doing, Camicazi?" Stormfly's abrupt interruption of her meditation caused her to scream and fall off from the rock. She found herself sitting in a small patch of mud, which only infuriated more than being startled back into reality. Enraging her even more was that the dragon had again called her 'Camicazi'.

Astrid muttered a few choice words as she pulled herself unto her feet. "What are you doing, sneaking up on me like that? Also, will you stop calling me 'Camicazi' already? My name is Astrid!"

The dragon inquisitively tilted her head, unsure why she protested. "But you look more like a 'Camicazi'."

Astrid growled with frustration as she brushed herself off. The dragon remained curious about her reaction. "Whatcha doing?"

It took some effort to calm herself after the scare the dragon gave

her. "I couldn't sleep, so I came out here to think."

"About what?"

Astrid was not in the mood to talk, especially to a talking dragon, yet she found herself treating the dragon as human. She had no idea why she even bothered doing so; it may have the ability to talk, but it was still just an animal. Who knew a talking dragon could challenge everything she knew about dragons. "I was wishing I was back at home rather than on this stupid island."

"There may be evil on this island, but I promised to take you to help."

Astrid looked at the dragon with leery eyes. "What kind of evil are you talking about?"

Stormfly changed color; but to what shade, she could not tell. There was not enough light for her to see clearly, but she was certain that it was not violet. "At sunrise, we must continue our journey. We can't afford to stay in one place for too long."

"Why? What's out there that we need to be aware of?" Astrid pushed, feeling as if she was intentionally trying to hide the truth.

"Don't worry, Camicazi. I'll lead you away from harm."

Before Astrid had a chance to respond, the dragon turned around and made her way back into the cave. Stormfly knew perfectly well what the evil was, and it terrified her. She wanted to tell Viking girl, but the dragon was too scared. She had been severely traumatized; just thinking about it was more than she could bare. With any luck, she could lead the Vikings away from the evil.

* * *

><p>When Hiccup awakened, he had more energy than he's had in weeks. It had been a very long time since he felt this well rested, despite a few nightmares that, he now only vaguely remembered. Until now, he was beginning to wonder if these nightmares were some kind of warning; but now, he wasn't so sure. Perhaps they were nothing more than frightening dreams.<p>

Feeling the stiffness of his body, he stretched out his extremities to loosen his muscles up. As he did, his father sat beside him in behind the the burnt out fire pit which was still smoking. "You gave us quite a scare last night. How are you feeling?"

"Eh, I could go for some breakfast right about now."

"We'll see what we can do about that," Stoick chuckled before his mood became more serious. "So, are you going to tell me about these dreams you've been having."

"Sorry, I had to tell him," Astrid said, joining the conversation and taking a seat on the other side of Hiccup.

Hiccup had no doubt that his father forced it out of her; perhaps it WAS time that the truth had come out. "It's nothing, really. It's only a few bad dreamsâ€| eeeeevery day for a few weeks."

Stoick shook his head, blaming himself for this. The boy was barely a man, and he's already been given a title. Ivar The Fearsome gave him the name 'Hiccup the Horrendous' when he paid Berk an unexpected visit a few months earlier. To earn such a frightening sounding title was the greatest honor bestowed on only those Vikings whose accomplishments are worthy to be told for generations to come. Hiccup had forever changed the way Vikings related with Dragons, and defeated two very deadly beasts on top of that. One of those beasts was the deadly Shadow Lord, the very dragon that Ivar the Fearsome was hunting. Ivar bestowed the title to Hiccup, knowing that his mark on Viking history had only just begun.

With such an honor given to him, more responsibility was thrust upon Hiccup, even at his young age. Stoick never thought twice about placing such a heavy burden on his son, but maybe he should have. "Perhaps I've overloaded you with responsibility?"

"No, Dad! That's not it at all!" Hiccup urged. "I can handle the authority, Dad! That's not the problem. I can't explain what's going on, but from what I remember of my dreams, the one thing that's been constant in all of them is this strange old native woman. It can't be a coincidence."

This conversation was quickly involving the whole group. All of his friends and even Gobber had wondered over to them. Gobber overheard his description of the old woman, and he could hold his tongue no longer. "You've been bewitched boy! I'd bet my one good leg that your dreams are coming from a witch."

"Gobber, not now!" Stoick was getting tired of these talks about witches and spooks. This was a particular inappropriate time to start that nonsense again.

Hiccup had no desire to get involved in that discussion again. Gobber was convinced that unnatural powers were behind all their misfortune. As wise and experienced of a warrior as he was, he did have a tendency to let his imagination get the better of him. Hiccup tended to believe that the past few days were just a string of bad luck, but these dreams of this elder woman, over the past few weeks, did give him some pause on his skepticism.

In excitement, Toothless pushed through the Vikings to get to Hiccup, who was quick to hover over Hiccup. All the Vikings laughed as Hiccup had to try to push the exuberant dragon off and get him to stop licking him. "Okay, okay!"

When the dragon finally calmed down and backed away, Hiccup decided it was time to stand up. He looked down at his artificial leg to see that the spring-loaded clamp, his prosthetic foot, was gone. All he had left was a shortened wooden stump.

"Here, let me help you," Astrid said.

With Stoick's aide, she helped him up. Standing with a wooden stump did not prove too hard. When Astrid and Stoick backed away, Hiccup tried to take a few steps, but without the metal clamp, walking proved to be quite difficult. Astrid stepped in and caught him before he fell to the face. "I think I'm gonna have to help for a while."

"I think we should pack up and head back to the shore. Who knows what's still out there on this island," Bitwolf suggested. The Young Vikings nodded their heads; all of them were starting to feel as if that was the best course of action.

Stoick surprised them all with his response. "I think we've seen enough of this Island. We're heading back to the main camp 'til help arrives."

Astrid looked around for Stormfly, wondering what she had to say about this decision, but the dragon was nowhere to be seen. "Has anyone seen the Mood Dragon this morning?"

All the young Vikings looked at each other with blank looks on their faces. "I've been up before everyone else; the dragon was long gone when I got up." Tuffnut replied.

"No you weren't! At sunrise, you were still fast asleep in your own drool!" Ruffnut replied, punching her twin brother in the shoulder.

"Hey!"

"The dragon left while we were all asleep?" Snotlout asked the question that everyone was mulling over. The dragon seemed almost inseparable to Astrid since they met; now, Stormfly was nowhere to be seen.

"Uh, there's something lurking through the bushes outside!" Fishlegs announced nervously.

Everyone's attention went to the bushes near the entrance of the cave. The sound of twigs snapping and leaves crunching from a distance alerted them that something was indeed approaching. Anyone who had a weapon and was capable of wielding them quickly pulled them out.

Stoick and Gobber stepped in front of the young Vikings, serving as a line of defense for the young Vikings. Stoick knew that it was an overreaction; the young Vikings were very capable in defending themselves. With Hiccup unable to ride Toothless and lead his friends, however, they were severely handicapped.

Stoick held his hammer high, ready to attack any dragon that attacked them. If it was Stormfly, everyone's nerves would quickly subside, but up to this point, the Mood Dragon had never resorted to sneaking around. Viking instinct told him that this was not Stormfly who was approaching.

Stepping out of the brushes were three bulky Vikings who nearly dropped their weapons when they saw their group at the mouth of the cave. The one of the middle had the largest horned helmet and was dressed as a Viking chief. As a chief, himself, he could recognize another instantly.

"I knew I heard voices," the chief said as he lowered his giant ax. "I don't recognize any of you, though."

Stoick lowered his hammer, overjoyed to, finally, run into another

human for once. His first reaction to seeing them almost had himself pinching his arm to make sure he was still awake. At last, the gods had finally decided to give them a break for once. "Thank Odin we're not the only Vikings here. We were stranded here by a giant storm. We were unaware that a Viking tribe inhabited this island."

The Viking chief laughed. "We don't get many visitors to our island due to these silly superstitious rumors out there."

"So—so the island is not haunted?" Fishlegs found the courage to speak, especially if what he was hearing was true.

"Those rumors are nothing but children tales run amuck, I assure you. This island maybe called the Outcast Lands, but there is nothing haunted about it."

"That's good to hear. These stories were starting to play havoc on our moral," Stoick chuckled. "I'm Stoick the Vast, chief of the tribe of Berk."

"Welcome, Stoick the Vast. The Outcast tribe welcomes you all to come to our village in your time of need. I'm the chief of this small, but mighty tribe; they call me Alvin the Treacherous!"

12. Chapter 12

Chapter 12

Everyone followed Alvin and his Vikings as they led them to the village. Nearly everyone was overjoyed to see other Vikings on this island; it made it feel a little less wild. Astrid, on the other hand, seemed more distracted by Stormfly's sudden disappearance. With Hiccup's arm wrapped around her shoulders, she provided him balance and strength when walking on the stump which used to be his artificial foot. As she guided him, she remained silent, but Hiccup knew that the disappearance of the dragon was still on her mind. He was not as concerned as she was; he assumed that this was the help that the dragon was talking about, and that the Mood Dragon was probably waiting for them back at the village.

"Did I hear you correctly, that you're from Berk?" Alvin asked Stoick, who was invited to walk next to him.

"Aye, it's a tiny island on the south-eastern edge of the Barbaric Archipelago."

"By any chance, do you know the Viking by the name of Hiccup?"

Stoick could not hide the shock on his face. "Yes, he's my son."

He waved for Hiccup to join him up at front. Astrid helped Hiccup walk up to his father's side; he was still having trouble walking on his broken prosthesis. He waved sheepishly, almost afraid of Alvin's reaction to seeing how un-Viking-like he was.

"This is my son: Hiccup the Horrendous."

The look on his face said everything; he was expecting a full-sized

adult, not a tooth-pick of a kid. "You? You're responsible for killing the dragon queen and the Shadow Lord?"

Snoutlout ran up and pushed Astrid out of the way so Hiccup could lean on him instead. "Hey!" Astrid protested!

"He sure is, and I'm his older cousin!" Snotlout grinned in pride.

Astrid pulled Snotlout away from Hiccup by the ear, nearly causing Hiccup to trip. She gave Snotlout a hard jab in the shoulder before rushing back by Hiccup's aide.

"Ow!"

"Yeah, only by a season," she grumbled.

Alvin looked at the back of the group to see the Night Fury following them. "By the gods, it is you!"

"Ah, and how do you know me, If I may ask?"

Alvin let out a hefty chuckle. Hiccup notice how close it was to his father's; it had that same powerful and authoritative tint to it.

"The stories of your heroism have spread across the Barbaric Archipelago. Our village is a big fan of yours."

"Really? Fans?" Hiccup eyes lit up at thought of actually being popular for once. It was a nice change of paces to be liked from the beginning, after almost a lifetime of being scoffed at.

"Yes, our children love to hear the tales of the brave warrior who rides on the back of a Night Fury. We've also adopted the dragons of our island as our friends; of course, there are a few mindless, carnivorous species which can't be reasoned with."

"That's to be expected. We've had our share of dragons like that," Stoick replied. "In fact, our village was just recently attacked by a couple of them, thus the reason for our journey. We were on our way to the Visitnug Territory to request help and supplies so we can rebuild."

"And then the strange weather marooned you here instead," Alvin put the last piece of the puzzle in place.

"More or less."

"If you don't mind me asking," Gobber could not hold in his question any longer. "How came we've never heard of you? Everyone has thinks your island is forbidden."

"I wish I knew who started those rumors. I'd make them get pretty friendly with my ax!" Alvin replied. "We keep to ourselves, for the most part; this island provides us with everything we need, though we would prefer it if we had more visitors every now or then."

As they continued their journey through the forest, Alvin had stolen a few glances towards Hiccups cracked wooden stump of a leg. "It looks like you're in need of new leg."

"Yeah, uh, we kind of had a run in with some hostile poison darters, and in all the commotion, Iâ€"I kindda had a mishap!"

Alvin laughed. "Those beasts may be stupid, but they're good at being a nuisance. I'll tell you one thing, they do make great cooking!"

The eyes of Stoick, Astrid, and Hiccup peered towards him, accompanied by looks of disgust. Alvin could not help but laugh at the expressions that they were giving him. "Relax, I'm joking!"

Alvin laughed as they lighten up after realizing that they had fallen for his joke. "We have a blacksmith shop at our village and a Viking who is probably the best blacksmith on this side of the globe."

"Next to Hiccup and me, of course," Gobber responded. He waved his artificial hand, which had his hammer attachment connected into it. "This, here, is my handy work. Just show us where the shop is, and Hiccup and I will build him a new leg that'll make even a pirate jealous."

"I'll let you and Viggor work that out," Alvin replied. "Well, here we are; welcome to the Outcast Tribe!"

The forest surrendered to a small, but healthy village that had a very similar feel to it as Berk. It was built at the foot of a giant volcano; it towered over them as a peaceful, sleeping giant. Though it looked like a small village, Hiccup was surprised by the number of Vikings he saw walking about.

As they entered the village, people started to take instant notice of them. Curiosity of the new Vikings caused many to stop at whatever they were doing. They were not used to having visitors come to their village, so they had no idea what to make of this.

"Listen up everyone!" Alvin spoke with such a thunderous voice that Hiccup sure that everyone in every part of the village could hear him. "We have visitors from another tribe among us today. Even more importantlyâ€" we have, in our midst, the one and only Hiccup the Horrendous!" Alvin pointed towards Hiccup, pointing him out to everyone in the village.

Hiccup could feel the growing number of eyes on him. The expressions on everybody's faces were as if they were seeing a ghost. When they saw Toothless enter the village with them, the realization hit them that this was for real.

The Outcast Vikings started to gather around them, but most of them were more interested in meeting Hiccup. Young children, seemingly coming from nowhere, were gathering around Astrid and Hiccup, making it very difficult to walk. A large crowd of children had also gathered around Toothless. They were excited about seeing their very first Night Fury. Showing no fear of the dragon, the kids were excited to touch the dragon; a few even started to play around with his wings. The poor Night Fury had no idea what to make of these children. The dragon gave Hiccup a look as if to cry, "Please make 'em stop."

"Like your village, we, too, have come to embrace the dragons as our friends. Because of you, young Hiccup, we get along with the beasts, and we no longer have to fear for our lives."

Hiccup was overwhelmed; he had no idea how befriending a dragon would change Viking traditions everywhere. He had been happy enough just to change Berk. Now, here he was on a strange island, surrounded by vibrant young children, who were not even afraid of a Night Fury. It was almost too good to believe.

"I see you brought company," A Viking said, walking up to his closest friend, Alvin.

"Aye, that I did, Viggor!"

All the young Vikings stared at Viggor in disbelief. "Can you believe this?" Astrid whispered to Hiccup.

Hiccup could not reply; he was so stunned. Viggor was the splitting image of Gobber, except for the black hair. He even had peg leg and an interchangeable, prosthetic hand. The resemblance was uncanny.

"I want you to meet Hiccup the Horrendous, the one and only," Alvin stepped aside and guided his friend towards Hiccup and Astrid.

"What this? You're just a boy! From all the stories I've heard, I thought you'd be a wee bit bigger."

"You'd be surprised how many times I've heard that."

"You're just a toothpickâ€¦ a twig even!"

"Aaaand, I've been called that quite a bit too."

"You're pulling my leg!" Viggor said, looking back at his friend to try to read his face and see if this was a joke.

"Here is his Night Fury to prove it!" Alvin directed his attention to the dragon at the back of the group. The number of children gathered around the dragon had increased. Some were playing with his wings. A young child, barely at the age to walk, came right up to Toothless' face and stuck her tiny hands into one of his nostrils. The dragon did not like that too much; he raised his head out of the young child's reach and shook his head as he bellowed out with a sneeze.

"Well I'll beâ€¦ I've never seen a Night Fury before."

"Viggor, the boy's in need of a new leg. Maybe you can fit him with a temporary replacement until you can create a new one."

"Hmm, let me take a look at what we have here," Viggor said. He scratched his chin as he looked down at what remained of Hiccups prosthesis. "I think I can whip something up."

"Just get him with a temporary one, and I'll do the rest," Gobber stepped up to Viggor, determined not to be outdone. "I built the last one, and I can very much do it again."

The two identical looking men inspected each other, and an instant

competitive nature began to form in both of them. "Oh, you mean this is your work?" Viggor pointed to the broken prosthesis. "Better let the younger, more experienced blacksmith, like myself, handle it."

"More Experience? Ah, that's a joke!" Gobber snarled.

"Gobber, be polite!" Stoick ordered firmly, placing a hand on his shoulder. "We're visitors to their home."

"Well, between the two of you, I'm confident something will be done. Right now, let's make our guess feel welcomed. Tonight, we honor you to our village by throwing you a giant feast!"

The Outcast villagers all cheered upon the announcement. Even Fishlegs joined in the celebration. He enjoyed the news so much, he could not hold back a tear. "I'm the happiest Viking in the world!"

13. Chapter 13

Chapter 13

"Okay, son, tell me how this feels," Viggor said as he took a step back.

He had finished with Hiccup's temporary prosthesis, as crude as it was. He took two thick branches and tied them to his wooden leg to strengthen the rotting wood. With a few nails, he attached a block of wood at the bottom, which would serve as his foot. The wood was carefully carved in a curve to match Hiccups natural walking stride. He could not ride Toothless with this arrangement, but again, this was only a temporary fix until his new prosthesis was complete.

Hiccup stood up from his stool, a task now made easier with that block of wood; it was a promising start. Next, came the more difficult part. He prayed to the gods that it would work well enough that he would not have to depend on anyone to help him walk from place to place.

Taking a deep breath, he took a step forward onto his prosthesis and managed to stay on his feet. He continued the test by walking across the shop as Viggor and Gobber watched. He walked with a slight limp, but this little fix of Viggor's seemed good enough for now. "I think this will do."

"Keep in mind, this is only temporary," Viggor assured him. "By tomorrow, I'll have an artificial leg that's fit for a hero."

"Wellâ€¦" Gobber stepped forward. "This may be a very primitive shop, but I think I can whip something up that should be somewhat up to my standards."

"Primitive? I've seen your work, and it's anything but impressive."

What was it with these two? From the very beginning, it was hate at

first sight. Hiccup had never seen Gobber this competitive before. There was nothing in the world worse than two hard-headed Vikings going at it, so while they were arguing, Hiccup sneaked out of the shop.

Astrid and Bitwolf had been sitting outside the hut talking while Hiccup was getting his prosthesis made. When they saw him come out, they were immediately at his side. "I see you're walking on your own again."

"It'll do," Hiccup replied with very little enthusiasm. As long as he was grounded from flying on the back of his Night Fury, he would not be very happy with any type of prosthesis given to him.

Hiccup looked at the expressions on his friend's faces and could tell that he had interrupted a deep conversation. They wore unease on their faces as if it was naturally painted onto them. "What's up, guys?"

Astrid looked at Bitwolf, using her eyes to tell him that he had better start the discussion. Bitwolf understood the message. "Something is not right here; we're both very uneasy about all of this."

"All of what?"

"This villageâ€¦ Alvinâ€¦ all of it!" Astrid replied. "Something is seriously outta whack here!"

"Our island is only a day from the western shore of this island. As far as I know, no one from my tribe has ever heard of these people."

"Let's not forget that they 'claim' that they've adopted the dragons on this island as their friends. There's not a single docile dragon anywhere to be seen in this village; I don't count the wild beasts that've tried to kill us since we've been here."

"How about Stormfly?" Hiccup pointed out. The mood dragon was the one responsible for bringing them here in the first place.

"Where is she? We haven't seen her since the cave." Bitwolf replied

"Iâ€¦ I don't trust her, Hiccup? That dragon has a nasty tendency to lie, and when she wasn't, she was very vague about everything. Stormfly is where my unease began," Astrid replied. She felt bad that she had such a distrust for the dragon, but she could not shake her gut feelings on the matter; something was amiss.

"Pardon me!" Alvin came out of nowhere to startle all three of the young adults. "Forgive me for intruding, but did you say something about Stormfly? Have you seen her?"

Hiccup's friends turned their eyes towards him. They were leaving it up to him whether or not to tell the Viking chief the truth. He could read it on their faces; they were against the idea. He was taking their concerns to heart, and had to admitâ€¦ they did bring up some very valid points. Thinking about it carefully, he did not see the harm in telling him the truth; perhaps it will shed some light on

some of their fears. "Yâ€yes, she led us to the cave where you found us. She's disappeared since."

Bitwolf did not try to hide the disappointing scowl he gave towards him. Astrid hid it much better, but Hiccup knew her well enough to be able to read it in her eyes; she thought this was a mistake, as well.

"You know about her?"

Alvin frowned and let out a soft sigh. "Aye. I've raised that dragon since just a hatchling. I thought she was a gift from the gods; who would have ever thought a dragon that can speak our language?"

"What happened?" Astrid asked.

"The dragon is young, and like all young children, she acquired a rebellious streak. We got in a fight, and she threw a temper tantrum. She flew off, and has not been back since."

"That could explain why she disappeared on us?" Hiccup stated. Looking over at Astrid and Bitwolf; neither was really buying his story. He had no idea why; it made perfect sense to him. The dragon was running away from home. She helped them just enough so they could be found and then took off, still not ready to resolve the issue.

"If I may ask, sir, what was the fight about?" Astrid asked.

"Think about it. She's the first dragon that can speak our language; Imagine what we could learn from them. I wanted to train her to communicate with the wild, more aggressive dragons. Instead, she spewed some nonsense about violating the dragon's privacy."

Without any warning, the earth moaned as the ground shook violently underneath their feet. The three young Vikings fought to stay on their feet as fear took hold of them. None of them have even been through an earthquake before, and it turned out to be more terrifying than they thought. The huts waved with the ground; the wood that they were made of was sturdy enough to remain intact.

Alvin had no problems standing on his feet. From his reaction, Hiccup could tell that these quakes were common place here on this island. The look on his face seemed to suggest that this was nothing more than a minor inconvenience. He merely looked back at the volcano until the shaking ended as quickly as it started.

The Vikings of the Outcast tribe acted as if nothing had happened and went on with everyday life. The reaction from Hiccup's tribe was another story all together. All of his friends came running out of different huts. When they saw him with Astrid and Bitwolf, they ran to join them. "Can you believe that? That was absolutely wild!" Snotlout laughed.

"Yeah, it was like a mega monster came out of nowhere and took a giant step to shakeâ€|" He stopped himself when he noticed everyone was giving him an annoyed look. "Or, maybe not."

"Alvin, are you sure your village is safe?" Stoick asked as he came walking up to them. He was on his way to check up on his son and

Gobber until the quake hit. "That volcano seems awfully angry."

Alvin bellowed out a hardy laugh. "There's nothing to fear. That mountain's nothing more than a kitten, though there's an interesting story behind it."

"Story?"

"Aye, passed down from generation to generation. You see, this tribe is a very religious tribe. Legend has it that before this land was inhabited, Odin and Thor, themselves, came here to do war against the fire giants and the weather giants.

"As the story goes, Surtur, of the fire giants, and Byelisk of the weather giants formed an alliance to try to destroy Odin. It was the first and only time that two different fractions of giants worked together for a common goal; the destruction of Odin and the conquest of Asgard. They lured Odin and his army here to this island. The giants nearly won, but what the giants didn't know, was that Odin KNEW that this battle was a trap."

"What happened next!" Tuffnut said excitedly.

"Really?" Ruffnut rolled her eyes, "These children stories still excite you this much? Grow up!"

"You like them too and you know it. You have a children's book stashed underneath your pillow that you read every night when you're alone."

Her return response was a fist cracking him in the nose and lips. "Shut up, troll!"

"Ow, that hurt! That very much hurt!"

Alvin disregarded the bickering of the twins and continued his story. "Knowing that this was a trap, he went into battle with the giants until it APPEARED that all was lost. That was when Odin sprung his own trap.

"Odin and his army vanished out of thin air, taking the giants by surprise. What the Giants failed to realize, was that they've been fighting illusions created by Loki. Odin and his army reappeared surrounding the giants along with Thor and an army of his own. Together, they decimated the giants.

"No one knows, for sure what happened to Byelisk, but this tribe believes that Surtur, and his pet dragon, Fenrir, are imprisoned here in this mountain. To this day, our tribe believes that it's the will of the gods for us to stand guard over this prison, and make sure the fire giant never escapes."

"That was an awesome story! I can just imagine Thor taking Mjöllnir and knocking some giant's heads with it," Snotlot swung an imaginary hammer in his imaginary battle with the giants. "What I wouldn't give to have a hammer like that!"

"Well, that's enough excitement for one day; our feast, in your honor, will start at sundown. It'll not be much longer now."

14. Chapter 14

Chapter 14

Alvin had not been kidding when he called it a feast. Never has Hiccup seen so much food in all of his life. If there was one thing Vikings were good at, it was eating; The Outcast tribe did it even better than the rest. For a small tribe, they had enough food to feed one three times its size. Snotlout and Fishlegs were beyond themselves when they saw the amount of food at the banquet table. "I don't know about you all, but I've died and gone to Valhalla!" Snotlout said.

"Can you believe this? Look at all this food!" Astrid gasped. Even she had to admit that the food looked scrumptious.

"I'm telling you all, something is not right here," Bitwolf mumbled so not to be heard by anyone of the Outcast tribe. "This is way too good to be true."

"If this is a dream, then I don't ever wanna wake up!" Tuffnut replied, wiping the drool off his lips with his wrist.

"Is that a roasted pig I see?" Ruffnut asked. Pork was a very rare commodity on Berk; no one on the island raised pigs. That was why their primary diet consisted of lamb and sea food.

"Not too shabby, if I may say so, myself." Hiccup agreed. He was going to have to sneak out some of this delicious food out for Toothless the first chance he got.

The young Vikings were directed to a bench where they could be together, along with Stoick and Gobber. Fishlegs stared at the food at the center of the table, anxiously waiting to grab himself some of this mouth watering food. "This is the best day of my life!"

There was a large empty space in the center of the room. It was perfectly placed so every person at every table had a view of this spot in the room. This was where Alvin would address his tribe on special occasions like this one.

Alvin stood in the center of the room, holding a big wooden mug of ale in his right hand. The moment he stepped into the center of the room, the room came to a deafening silence. "Today is a rare day for us. It's not often when the gods bless us with visitors. These Vikings have come from the tribe of Berk. They are in need of our assistance, for it appears that two rouge dragons have decimated their home. I have invited them to stay with us a few days to rest and relax. When their friends return from their journey to the Visittug Territory, I have promised that we will come with them to their island to help them rebuild."

The Vikings in the room applauded at the news. Hiccup was glad to hear that help was coming for Berk. He supposed his father sat down with the Viking chief and told him everything that had happened leading up to coming to this village. Within the next two or three days Ivar and the Killagain tribe will arrive here to the Island. When they arrived with Berk's Vikings, they could all return to Berk

and begin the process of rebuilding.

"It's an honor to have you, Stoick the Vast and Hiccup the Horrendous, at our village in the meantime. This feast is in your honor. So let's eat to our heart's content; this is a celebration!"

Everyone cheered as they commenced their feast. The young Vikings of Berk went wild grabbing food as if there was no tomorrow. Snotlout and Tuffnut were the most aggressive of them. Seeing this caused Alvin to chuckle. He was on his way to his table when he saw a pair of yellow eyes looking in through the crack of the door.

"Viggor, save some of that roasted pig for me; I'll return momentarily." The Viking chief made his way to the door. After making sure no one was following him, he pushed open the door and stepped outside. "It's very dangerous for you to be out in the open like this, witch."

The old Ethiopian woman frowned. The disrespect that her son continued to show towards her was quickly getting on her nerves. Perhaps he was embarrassed by her? His father was a strong Viking chief, and by Viking tradition, it was taboo for a Viking to marry outside their own kind. However, Alvin's father did just that, and married her. As a penalty, they were banished from their tribe. This was all before Alvin was born, but somehow, she still got the sense that her son resented her for ruining his father's life, resulting in him sharing in his shame.

"The Vikings that departed here to find the Killagain Tribe have left the Visitnug Territory and shall reach our shore by this time tomorrow. I can summon harsh weather, and confuse them on their journey, but we have no more than three or four days before they find us. You know Ivar the Fearsome is leading this expedition, himself? Confusing him will not be an easy task."

"That's more than enough time. We'll be well on our way to Berk by that time."

The witch shook her head. "Son, I urge you to dispose of the chief's son immediately. The longer you wait, the more things there are that can go wrong."

"How dare you call me 'son' woman!" Alvin growled. "You have forfeited that right long ago. I will not pass up this opportunity; I will use young Hiccup and his pretty little girlfriend, to draw Stormfly back to me. After I kill that wretched dragon, I will sacrifice Hiccup and his tribe to the Furious. With them out-of-the-way, Berk will be defenseless from my wrath. I WILL have their dragons, if it's the last thing I do."

"And what of my sister? She has already shown initiative in trying to warn the young boy about us."

"I will have a constant watch over Hiccup. If she tries to make contact with him, then we will use the boy to lead us to her. I will either have the dragon or your sister before I even think about springing the trap."

* * *

><p>The sun had not begun to rise when Hiccup awakened. He did not know how early in the morning it was, but he knew sunrise was still a few hours away. Toothless always tried to awaken him minutes before the sunrise started to peak. The fact that the Night Fury was still sleeping, told him enough about how early it was.<p>

Despite how early it was, he knew, immediately, that he was up for good; there was no going back to sleep now. His day had begun, but how to start it was the question. He would be the only one awake at this ungodly hour, and exploring a strange place alone in the dark was something he was not brave enough to try. Neither was he really interested in sitting here for hours, staring at the walls. He needed to start his day, and he knew exactly where to do it.

* * *

><p>Viggor was up at sunrise, and immediately began working on the prosthesis for Hiccup. Unfortunately, Gobber was already inside the shop working on his own invention. That was when the competition began. The two of them worked on opposite ends of the shop. On a few occasions, they reached out for the same tool, which resulted in the two Vikings butting heads and sharing insults.<p>

After a couple of hours of non-stop labor, they both ended up finishing at the same time. "This should do it. I think Hiccup'll like the improvements I've made here," Gobber said out loud, inspecting his completed invention.

"That thing? No Viking would be caught dead using that piece of junk," Viggor mocked. "Now mine, on the other hand, is a piece of art! Hiccup will be able to do things he's not been able to do in a long time."

Viggor held up his prosthesis in triumph. It was impossible to describe; it was a jumble of wood, steel, and coils that did not even come close to looking like a foot. "That is a sad piece of... I don't know what to call that thing. The one thing I know about Hiccup is that he lives by one motto: keep it simple, stupid!"

Before Viggor had the chance to rebut, the door to the back room of the shop swung open. Hiccup walked out of the room, and was startled to see both of them in the shop. "Oh, wow, It's that late already?"

"Hiccup?"

"I hope you two don't mind, but I went ahead and built my own leg." Hiccup showed off his new prosthetic leg. "It's just like the old one, but I added some of my own modifications. I made it spring loaded so I can jump and even dismount from the saddle much easier."

Hiccup demonstrated its capabilities by taking a few steps forward. The steel latch slid up when he put his weight on it, and then slid down once his weight was off it. There was no mistaking the improvement in his walking pattern. That slight limp in his walk was virtually gone. After taking a few steps, he stopped and bent his knees. He jumped two times and landed perfectly each time. It had been a long time since he was able to do that without

stumbling.

"Well, I think I'm gonna go have some breakfast. See ya!" Hiccup exited the shop, leaving the two stunned Vikings with their creations in their hands.

Hiccup's stomach growled impatiently as he walked through the village. After hours working on this new prosthesis, he was beginning to fear that he possibly missed out on breakfast. He had been so engrossed in his work, that he had no idea how late it was getting.

"There you are! I've been lookingâ€" Astrid ran up to him, but stopped when she noticed his new prosthetic leg. "Did you make that?"

He felt good that she took instant notice to his handy work. "Why, yes I did," he replied proudly. "And I made some big modifications to it. I added a spring to it, to give me more agility. I can now run and jump without tripping or stumbling, and I can dismount from Toothless' back much easier."

"That's amazing!" Astrid replied. "You never cease to amaze me!"

"I see you have your new leg now, excellent!" Alvin said, approaching the two Vikings. He was starting to get into an annoying habit of interrupting their conversations, almost as if he deemed his matters more important. Hiccup did not want to carry any unnecessary grudge towards the Viking chief, but the way he came out of nowhere and interrupted his conversations with his friends was starting to get on his nerves just a bit.

"Yeah, I woke up early and couldn't fall back to asleep, so I decided to build my own prosthesis."

"You possess some great skills, there's no denying that," he replied. "Anyway, seeing that you are now free to ride your dragon again, I was hoping you would help find StormFly and try to convince her to return to the village. This tantrum has gone on long enough, and it's time that she came back home."

"I don't see why not. Toothless, Astrid, and I will start looking first thing after breakfast."

"Great to hear, son!" Alvin slapped him across the back and walked away.

15. Chapter 15

Chapter 15

Toothless was excited for the opportunity to fly again; trying to fasten the harness on him, while he was this excited, was a difficult task. There was no calming the Night Fury down when he got like this, so it took Hiccup longer than it should have. "Okay, we're ready to go. I supposed now is as good of a time as any to test out my new leg."

Astrid took her place by Toothless' neck, stroking him to keep him

still for Hiccup's first attempt to climb onto the saddle with his new prosthesis. The Night Fury lowered himself giving Hiccup the chance to get on his back.

Hiccup put his makeshift foot into the stirrup's tread clamp; the spring loaded coils in his foot pressed down as he put all of his body's weight on it in the process of climbing. It was successful in handling the weight. The coils gave his left leg additional strength to make getting up on the saddle easier than ever before. As his weight came off his prosthesis, it locked into the clamp.

After positioning himself comfortably on the saddle, he tested his new leg once more to see how it handles controlling Toothless's artificial tail-fin. Carefully, he pushed his knee down to causes the tail-fin to expand. His foot remained locked into the clamp without any problems. He pulled up his knee, and the tail-fin collapsed and his foot yet again remained locked into the stirrup.

The final test was to see how easy it was to unlock his prosthesis from the latch. He put weight on the prosthesis until the coils were pressed down, and with a soft metallic CLICK he could slide his foot out of the stirrup. Sliding it back in, he put pressure down on the coils again and it relocked perfectly.

Astrid smiled up at Hiccup. "I'd call that a successful test."

"So would I." Hiccup offered his hand down to her.

She grabbed his hand and accepted his help up onto the saddle, sitting behind him. Hiccup could feel her arms wrap around his waist. He could almost feel the enthusiasm and anticipation radiating from her. It's been awhile since the last time they flew together. There was a serious task to be done, but that didn't mean they couldn't have fun doing it. An aerial view of the island was a relaxing adventure; an adventure that both of them could use right about now.

"Okay Toothless, we're ready to â€œ"

Hiccup looked around to notice a large crowd of Vikings gathering around them. The news got around the village that Hiccup and Toothless were going to fly around the island, and they were all anxious to see them take flight. The children, in particular, were the most excited to see the Night Fury in flight with their own eyes. After hearing all the stories of the adventures of Hiccup and his Night Fury, this was their first time that they were going to see one in person.

Astrid put a hand on his shoulder. "You're a hero to these people."

Hiccup looked out at the children that had gathered around. He could see the anticipation in their eyes, waiting to see their legendary hero take to the sky on his dragon. "I know, and it feels very weird."

Toothless let out an impatient grumble; he was ready to fly, and could not understand what the delay was about. Sensing his restlessness, Hiccup decided not to keep him waiting. "Let's go Toothless."

Toothless grinned as he extended his wings. Hiccup did his part and extended Toothless' left tail-fin. With everything set, the dragon leapt off the ground. The on-looking Vikings cheered as the Night Fury cut through the sky with great agility and swiftness. They had seen many dragons fly, but the way a Night Fury flew was more beautiful to behold. Of all the flying dragons, they ruled the sky like no other. Very few Vikings ever got the opportunity to behold one of these rare creatures; and that was why they cheered with great exuberance.

It did not take Toothless very long to reach above all the trees of the island. Before long, they were flying through the white, billowy clouds. "Aw man, I can't tell you how much more I can do now with these new improvements!"

Astrid smiled, happy to see Hiccup back to his old self again. She had no idea of the nightmares he's been having been still plaguing him, but right now, he was like a new man. "Then, how about you show me?"

"How about it, Toothless; feel like indulging a little?"

The Night Fury was more than willing to display some fancy maneuvering. Astrid held onto Hiccup tightly as Toothless nose dived towards the tree tops. The sharpness of the wind stung their faces as the tree tops grew larger. Enjoying the sensation of the wind in his face, Toothless inadvertently stuck out his tongue which whipped around in the wind.

"Let's give the upward spiral a whirl," Hiccup said, tapping Toothless' neck.

This was a move that proved quite challenging. The hardest part of it was the very beginning; to start this move, Toothless had to expand his wings just enough to slowly break out of the nose dive, while Hiccup had a rapid session of expanding and retracting the tail-fin. Up until now, doing that was very awkward and painful; with the new coil spring system he installed, the strain on his leg, as he did this exercise, should be greatly diminished.

Toothless understood what they were going to do, and was willing to give it a try. He remembered their other attempts to do this trick... they all ended in failure. The point that always caused the failure was when the break out of the nose dove, and immediately trying to jump into the first spiral upward. Every time they tried, either Toothless successful made the spiral but failed at angling himself to re-ascend, or he ascended upward and failed in doing a perfect spiral. He was just as determined as Hiccup to get this maneuver perfected.

"This is it, Toothless; we're gonna get it this time! Now!"

Toothless spread his wings half-way and their free fall began to level out. Hiccup lightened up on the tread pedal slightly until they were near level, and then pressed down hard, expanding the left tail-fin completely. Toothless unraveled his wings the rest of the way and immediately leaned left to begin the spiral. As Hiccup again lightened up on the tread, Toothless flapped as hard as he could to

ascend as he began his spiral.

This was the moment this whole maneuver would either succeed or fail. Again, Toothless did everything perfectly, and for the first time, his leg was not failing him. As the Night Fury Began to ascend, the dragon put all of his weight to his left, causing him to fly sideways. As that moment, Hiccup once more pushed down on the tread pedal and fully expanding the artificial tail-fin. Toothless curved around and succeeded in starting a spiral that ascended back up into the sky. They flew four complete spirals before reaching the clouds where they had started; they had successfully pulled off the upward spiral maneuver.

Hiccup raised his hands in triumph as they leveled out and flew on a straight course. "Yeah!"

"You did it!" Astrid rewarded Hiccup for his accomplishment with a kiss on the cheek.

His face began to glow, but before he could relish it, Toothless went into a celebration mode of his own. He spat out a puff of blue flames. "Toothlessâ€¦ wait!"

Toothless swerved at the last second, narrowly missing the mist of flames. Hiccup and Astrid bowed their heads to avoid being seared. "Ow! Hot!" Astrid complained.

Toothless repeated the game and spat another puff of flames. Like before he dodged the flames at the very last second. "Toothless, it's too dangerous to play Dodge with TWO of us up here!"

Dodge was a game that Toothless introduced to Hiccup on their very first successful flight. Not only did the Night Fury find it thrilling to play, but Hiccup believed that it also helped him keep his instincts sharp, not to mention that he liked the feeling of the flame's heat spraying in his face. Hiccup wished he had known about this on their first flight; his hair had gotten fairly singed and his face was slightly burned. Since that first time, they played Dodge quite often, and Hiccup had learned how to avoid getting burned.

When Toothless realized the situation, he switched to another form of celebration. He swooped towards the tree tops, spinning rapidly. The two Vikings held on tightly, clenching their eyes to keep the spinning world from getting them dizzy. Hiccup was worried about Astrid who was not fastened down into the saddle as he was. Neither had she ever done anything like this on a dragon before; he had no idea how she would handle this maneuver.

His concern was unwarranted, as she was laughing while holding onto him for her dear laugh. She was not one to shy away from danger; she ran to it with a shield in one hand and an ax in the other. As nerve wracking as it was, Astrid enjoyed every moment of it.

Toothless ceased his spinning and went to gliding just out of the reach of the trees; the branches tickled his stomach as he sliced through the air. With the rough riding now at an end, she lightened up on her hold of Hiccup and enjoyed the view. Four basic brown dragons pierced through the tree tops and soared through the sky. None of the dragons paid them any attention as they flew past them to

their unknown destination.

"We should've caught Stormfly's attention by now. For a gold dragon, she's pretty hard to find."

Hiccup was thinking the same thing. The chances of finding Stormfly up from the sky were minimal; the tree tops were too thick to see through, making it way too easy for the Mood Dragon to hide. She seemed content to merely watch them up in the sky from her hiding spot down below. "Perhaps it'd be better if we get the gang together and search the forest by foot."

"Agreed," Astrid replied. "But on the way back, let's check out the volcano."

"Sounds fun."

Informing Toothless of the change of plans, they made their way towards the top of the mountain. The giant mountain towered over the rest of the island like a sleeping giant. As they got closer, the more intimidating it became. This volcano had a very dark presence to it, and Hiccup began to question if they should stay away from it. The smell of ash, acid, and smoke that emanated from its mouth served as a secondary warning. The third warning came from Toothless, who appeared to be apprehensive about the volcano.

"Strange, Toothless doesn't want to fly over the Volcano."

Astrid pinched her nose. "Who can blame him; I feel like my lungs are burning."

Hiccup felt the same with his lungs. Something was seriously wrong, and he had to know what it was. He rubbed the Night Fury's scaly neck. "Come on Toothless; just allow us a quick look down."

Reluctantly, the dragon agreed, and cautiously flew over the mouth of the volcano. What they were expecting to see, was dried-out, lava rock inside the volcano; that would have been a sign that it was dormant. Instead, what they found, was much more unsettling. The Volcano was filled with red-hot, flowing magma. "Uh, this mountain doesn't look all that dormant," Astrid said with a horrific look on her face.

Hiccup was astonished at what he was seeing. It all explained the foul order that was coming from the mountain. "You're right, this mountain's active. This thing is gonna erupt, and soon."

"We've to get back to the village and warn everyone! We've got to begin evacuating the village."

"Back to the Village, Toothless," Hiccup said to his dragon. Happy to get away from raunchy smell of the volcano, the Night Fury took off quickly for the village.

After the Night Fury departed, a pair of bone-like horns peered out of the flaming-hot magma. From within the magma, and unsettling growl echoed. The horns swam through the lava, as if inspecting what was happening outside the volcano, and once their curiosity was quenched, the renumbered.

16. Chapter 16

Chapter 16: Plan Accelerated

With Hiccup searching for Stormfly, the village started to resemble its old self—somewhat. There was an unforeseen consequence of allowing Hiccup and his Vikings from Berk to come to the village. Their arrival had brought hope to those who opposed him. If he was not careful, he could lose his hold on this village. That was why he had men, loyal to him, quietly imprisoning known Vikings who was against his rule as Viking chief. He could not allow a coup to take place when he was so close to having an army of dragons at his disposal.

Alvin was walking by the blacksmith shop when Viggor came out of the hut. "You have a moment?"

Alvin chuckled as he gave him a hard slap on his right upper-arm. "Of course, my friend. I assume that you handled Snarsbait and his family."

Viggor nodded with pride. "I turned their dwellings into a new confinement hut. It has the potential to hold five more Vikings."

"Good job, my friend," Alvin laughed. "I can always depend upon you."

"I'm glad you feel that way. Perhaps, then, you'll take me advice."

"And what advice do you have for me?"

Viggor looked around to see if any of Berk's Vikings were near-by. "I think the time has come that we make our move. We should put all of the boy's friends in a confinement hut, and use that as an incentive for him to do what you want."

"Trust me, that idea has crossed my mind," Alvin admitted. "But he's too smart. He'd just find a way to free them and ruin my plans yet again. That lad has thwarted my plans twice; there will not be a third."

A shadow flew over them, catching their attention; Toothless was coming in for a landing. Alvin nodded his head, signally his friend that their conversation would have to continue later. Understanding the situation, Viggor headed back for his shop.

As Toothless landed, the Vikings of the village were quick to gather around him once again. As Alvin went to greet Hiccup and his girlfriend, he could not help think about how things were soon going to change for the popular lad. His growing hatred for the young hero continued to grow, making it harder for him to pretend to be friendly towards him and his friends. The boy has been a constant thorn in his side for the past year. It was time that he paid the price for everything he has done, and Alvin will be there, celebrating, when justice finally came.

Hiccup dismounted from the Night Fury's back along with his pretty little girl friend. Alvin had contemplated sacrificing the girl to the Furious first, just to make him suffer. The only reason he decided against it was, because as long as he lived, he would be a threat. Hiccup had already ruined his chances to add two of the most deadly dragons to his army. Actually, if he was able to get his hands on Green Death or the Shadow Lord, he would not need an army of dragons; they were more than deadly enough on their own. Instead, the boy had gone and killed both of them, leaving him dragonless. If he could not have those two dragons, then he will have Berk's, and with that many dragons obeying him, Rome would fall.

After Rome was destroyed, he seriously contemplated going after the Chinese. Rumors were spreading that they had discovered a powder that can weaponize fire. He would not stand any form of competition; therefore, the Chinese had to be brought down to size.

Hiccup and Astrid urgently pressed through the gathering crowd of Vikings towards him. Alvin hoped the anxious looks on their faces was a good sign. "So, any luck finding Stormfly?"

Hiccup scratched the back of his scalp as he looked down at his feet. "Ehâ€"no, but we've got another situation."

"Your volcano is going to erupt. We're all in a lot of danger," Astrid pressed.

Alvin half expected them to discover the imminent danger that the Volcano. He knew perfectly well that the volcano was in danger of erupting. He and the witch were the only ones that knew the truth. His story of Surtur the Fire Giant was nothing more than a fairy tale. It was the only way to convince his tribe that they were safe. Somehow, his mother knew the mountain as if she created it herself; she assured him that they had more than enough time before it went off. "I wouldn't give it any worry. It's been threatening for years. As I said, my people will not allow Surtur and his dragon to escapes their prison."

He could see it in their eyes; they weren't totally convinced of the story. Could it be that his mother was right? Was he pushing his luck too far? "I suppose taking precaution wouldn't hurt. Out of respect of your reputation, I will begin evacuating most of the village if you would be willing to look for Stormfly one more time for me. If there's even a remote chance of an eruption ..."

"We were thinking about going back out again, anyway, but this time on foot. I figured my friends and I can explore the forest together."

"Good to hear, but I wouldn't go too far beyond the volcano. There're some ill-tempered dragons nesting on that side of the island." Alvin tried to read the boy's face. He wanted to see if the boy had any intentions of violating his 'suggestion'. If Hiccup found his two dragons out there, everything would be ruined.

"We won't be long; Toothless is kinda nervous around the volcano."

Alvin read no deceit or mistrust in his face, which put his concern at ease. Now, he can focus on a new worry of his. If the Night Fury

was scared of the mountain, then the children's concerns could be valid. He had to know for sure if this mountain was getting ready to blow, and then confront the witch. For her sake, she had better not be lying to him. He didn't care if she was his mother; he would kill her on the spot.

* * *

><p>Alvin had to know, for certain, if the volcano was coming alive before addressing the witch on the issue. That was why he visited the small pond outside the village, near the bottom of the mountain. The evidence was overwhelming. There were dying trees and brushes surrounding the pond, and the water itself had become acidic. A nauseating smell of sulfur emanated from the boiling water. There could be no doubt that the mountain was ready to go. The witch had some explaining to do.<p>

He had started towards the hut, looking over his own shoulders, but it didn't take him long to realize that none of Berk's Vikings were in the village. There was no need for him to sneak to the witches hut when there was no danger of them finding out. For the rest of the walk, he walked like an angry Viking chief, who wanted no distractions from anyone on his way to the hut.

He threw the door open, nearly ripping it off the hinges, as he stormed into the hut. The witch was anything but surprised by his abrasive entrance. She was standing in front of her giant fire pit in the center of the room. Hoisted over the flames was a large, black caldron. She wasâ€"no doubtâ€"cooking up another one of her crazy 'spells'. "Witch, we need to talk!"

"You're concerned about the volcano. I can read it on your face."

He hated the fact that she could read his mind before he even entered the room. She did it to continue to try and convince him that her superstitious beliefs and powers were real. He could not explain many of the things she is capable of doing, but he was still not going to buy into it. "Of course I am. You told me that we had more time before the volcano erupted."

"The Furious is restless. If I do not release him from his prison soon, he will cause the volcano to erupt. I've warned you that you cannot delay any longer. The chief and his son need to be sacrificed, and the invasion of Berk must begin."

Alvin grumbled something underneath his breath. He had hoped to use Hiccup the Horrendous to lure Stormfly back to the village. He wanted to kill that cursed dragon for betraying him and taking the leg of his friend, Viggor. She refused to help him convince every dragon they met to join his cause. She defied him and ran away. He had hoped to make her pay by feeding her to his two pet Timberjacks, the very same dragons that he used to attack Burk, and lure Hiccup and his friends to the island.

Now, that hope was all but gone. Perhaps after his conquest of Berk and the Roman Empire, he could return here and seek out the dragon. With his army of dragons, the task should be much easier. "Very well, the Vikings of Berk are out searching for the Mood Dragon, but they have left the Night Fury here, due to his fear of the volcano. I will have my men trap the Night Fury, but I want you to keep an eye out on

the Berk Vikings. If they find the dragon, then I'll kill the dragon along with them."

"And what if they meet my sister? By now, she knows that this would be her last chance to make contact with the boy."

"And that's why I want you to keep an eye out. If she makes her move, report to me."

17. Chapter 17

****Chapter 17: ****

It was painful to watch the friendly humans search for her, and not be able to respond; they didn't know The Evil One in the way she did. Stormfly knew that they were being used against her, and there was no way of warning them without revealing herself. The witch was keeping a close eye on them, making it impossible for her to talk to them.

She had herself to blame for her current predicament. She had wanted to bring them to the old woman in the forest; that female was the only one, on this island, who could help them now. The problem was how to direct them there without being spotted by the old witch.

The memories of all the horrible things that Alvin had done to her had caused her to gain a paralyzing fear of humans for a long time. The Evil One was her first ever encounter with them right from the moment she hatched from her egg. At first, he seemed very friendly and compassionate; she wished she had only heeded the warnings of the other dragons on this island. The witch had given her the ability to speak and fully comprehend the Norse language. Stormfly thought that the gift of speech, she gave her, would only confirm her trust in the humans.

As it turned out, it was the other dragon's fears that ended up being confirmed. The Evil One had the witch give her this gift to rise up all the dragons on the Island to go to war against another group of his own kind. She abhorred unnecessary violence, and the thought to be used as the human's weapon was something she did not like to dwell on. When she refused, the Evil One had his followers torture her. She had managed to escape before he had the chance to carry out his threat to kill her, and she had never been back to the village since.

That was the beginning of her distrust of the humans, but when she came across the old human female in the woods, she quickly learned that, like dragons, there were many types of humans and even more different types of personalities. She then told her that one day, a new group of Vikings will come to the island, and one of those Vikings would be a brave, young girl. This young girl would be in need of her help, for she would have suffered a great loss, and would become reckless with her own life. That was why she called the young blond-haired girl 'Camicazi'. As the old woman foretold, she could see the turmoil in Camicazi. Stormfly had no idea why, but despite the tough, aggressive appearance on the outside, she was grieving. Her grief was what prompted her to separate herself from her friends when they were attacked by the Skullions. She was the one that the old woman told her to befriend, and that's what she did when rescuing

her from certain death at the jaws of those mindless land dragons.

There was no doubt that she had to do something to save Camicazi and her friends; she was also certain that this would be her last opportunity to do so. The volcano was coming alive, and the monstrosity that lived inside of it was awakening. As much as the witch wanted to believe that she controlled that monster, he was a monster that could not be controlled or reasoned with. She had encountered Furious once before and barely survived. There was no questioning his intelligence, but he was still a mindless creature whose sole instinct was to devour any and all prey. The dragon had showed no signs of understanding her attempt to communicate with him; either that, or he did not care what she had to say.

With time running out, she may have to risk exposing herself to get the young humans to the old woman in the woods. There was no longer any way around it. As long as the whole group stayed together, there was always a chance that she would be successful in helping them escape.

* * *

><p>All of the young Vikings were more than willing to work together to find the dragon, despite the threat of the volcano. Hiccup had to wonder if his friends really understood the danger they were in. The only one that seemed to understand was his father. Stoick made it clear that he thought searching for the Mood dragon was reckless. Despite his objection, he respected Hiccup enough to go along and help in this search.<p>

"We've been out here for nearly an hour, without one sign of that stupid dragon," Ruffnut complained.

"Yeah, you can't find something that doesn't want to be found," Tuffnut grunted, quickly growing agitated by their lack of progress. He was not one for exploring strange lands; he was happiest at home, in his familiar environment. The longer he stayed on this island, the fouler his mood became.

"Perhaps if we use fish as bait, we can lure her out. That always works with Horrorcow," Fishlegs suggested.

"Not all of us jump at the first sight of food," Snotlot replied dryly.

"Not to mention that this dragon is smarter than that," Bitwolf replied. "She found us easily enough before; she's probably watching us now, as we speak."

Stoick walked up to Hiccup and Astrid, who had almost tuned out all the chatter of their friends. "Your friends are right, you know. If Stormfly wanted to be found, she would have come to us by now. It was foolish of Alvin the Treacherous to send you out on this mission, when we should be more focused evacuating his people."

"Actually, we're no longer doing it for him," Hiccup said.

"What? Why then?"

He and Astrid started conversing with their eyes. They had talked about having this conversation with him before setting out from the village. They supposed now was as good as a time to fill him in. Since it was Astrid's intuition, she decided to be the one to fill him in. "We don't trust him. There's just so many unanswered questions swirling around him, and we think that Stormfly might have the answers."

Hiccup was not surprised by his father's reaction. Alvin had been nothing but friendly since they first met. Even He had bought into his good intentions until Astrid and Bitwolf pointed out some interesting facts that he couldn't explain. He could no longer look at the Outcast Tribe's chief without being suspicious of ulterior motives.

Stoick had also been kept very busy by Alvin since arriving to the village. Perhaps it was to keep him too distracted to cause any problems for him. While he may have attributed it to two Viking chiefs brainstorming, Hiccup was, now, not so sure. "Now, what could Alvin possibly have done to make you suspicious?"

"I'm glad I'm not the only one," Gobber said before the young Vikings could respond. Everyone was shocked to hear him say that. Yes, he went a little loopy with his fear of unnatural forces working against them, but that kind of talk had ended the moment they found this tribe of Vikings. Everyone just assumed that he had realized that he had allowed his imagination to get away from him.

"You too?"

"Aye, even I can see the mixed feelings among the Vikings here. There are more Vikings in this village which seem afraid for their lives; not to mention that creepy old woman I spotted sneaking around the village."

"What creepy old women?" Hiccup's mind immediately envisioned the old woman in his dream. He could not explain why; there could be plenty of creepy, elderly Viking-women in the village. Odin knows, Berk had more than its fair share of them. Yet, he had a gut feeling that Gobber was talking about the same old woman from his dreams.

"I've only seen her once, but she was the ugliest old woman I've ever seen in my life. She's not even a real Viking. She hadâ€"dark skin."

Hiccup fought to hide his reaction by slightly turning away from everyone. He only hoped that no one saw his reaction. His mind was reeling with the coincidence; he was not ready to talk about this until things made a little more sense to him, or everyone would begin to think that he, too, was crazy.

"This is crazy," Stoick said, shaking his head while pinching the bridge of his nose. "I'm sorry about the Mood Dragon, Astrid, but I have to think of the safety of all of you, and those we left at the shore. We're heading back to the village."

"It's about time," Snotlout muttered.

In agreement to that assessment, everyone began to follow Stoick except Hiccup and Astrid. Hiccup was so mentally busy, that he failed

to hear his father; Astrid noticed his strange reaction, and decided to stay with him. "We'll catch up with you all."

Stoick led the way as Hiccup and Astrid watched him and their friends head back to the village. When they were gone, she gave Hiccup a slight jab on the arm to break him out of his trance. "Hiccup, what's wrong with you?"

Hiccup never flinched, but he showed that he did feel the jab by rubbing his upper arm. "That woman that Gobber described is the same woman in all of my dreams. I'm sure of it."

"Are you sure? How is that even possible?"

Hiccup had no idea how if it was possible or not, but it only confirmed to him that they were right to suspect Alvin. Could the dream be from the gods to warn him of Alvin and this old woman?

A small breeze streamed through the forest, bringing with it a soft feminine voice that flowed right towards their ears. "Camicazi."

"Stormfly? That was Stormfly!" Astrid's hope was rekindled as she tried to determine what direction the voice came from.

"This way, Camicazi!"

"She's coming from that direction," Hiccup pointed to the left—the opposite direction of the village. Astrid was already running in that direction before he concluded the sentence. Throwing caution to the wind, she followed after the voice. "Astrid... wait!"

He ran after her, worried that they were being lured into trouble. She did not stop and wait for him; she ran towards the voice that continued to sound just out of their reach, no matter how far they ran. Hiccup knew that the dragon was not revealing herself to them; she was leading them somewhere.

Astrid ran through the forest, brushing branches aside which Hiccup had to dodge. He failed a few times, and ended up getting a stinging slap in his face, nevertheless. "Ow! Astrid!"

There was no telling how far they had run, and the farther they got from the village, the more concerned Hiccup became about running into another pack of unfriendly dragons. Then again, Stormfly was nearby, and she had not steered them wrong—yet. Hiccup had almost lost sight of Astrid when she came to an abrupt halt, almost causing him to crash into her. "Astrid, why'd you..."

He didn't have to finish the question; he knew why she came to a sudden stop. Standing in front of them was an elderly European woman, dressed in a strange ragged, animal-skin cloth. Her hair was pure white, but her face still had some youth left to display. Next to Hiccup, she was probably the skinniest person they had ever seen, which only proved that she wasn't a Viking. From the expression on her gentle face, she was nowhere near as surprised to see them as they were to see her. "Ah, I've been expecting you," she said in a soft, heavily accented voice.

18. Chapter 18

Chapter 18: Captured

The people of the Outcast tribe were acting very strangely when they returned to the village. At first, Stoick was thinking that he was allowing Astrid and his son's suspicion cloud his judgment. It quickly became apparent that was not imagining it. The Vikings were intentionally avoiding them. He wasn't the only that noticed it either.

"Why is everyone avoiding us? Do I smell or something?" Snotlout asked.

The village was usually bustling with Viking children running around in play, but there was not one kid in sight. The adults looked at them and immediately became skittish and went out of their way to keep away. The very people who had once lavished them with awe and attention were now showering them with distrust and disdain.

Tuffnut chuckled. "Ha, perhaps it's your look that's scaring them away."

Ruffnut was in no mood for his teasing; unleashing her quick temper, she plowed her fist into his nose, perhaps harder than she had ever done in the past. "Ow! You didn't have to hit me so hard, I was only joking!"

"You didn't have to be so stupid."

Gobber walked up to his friend's side. "What'd ya think crawled up their trousers?"

Stoick didn't know what was happening, but there was an increasing pressure in his mind, warning him that they were in grave danger. His instincts were telling them that they needed to leave, and quick. The trick was going to be how to leave without raising suspicion.

"Hey, what's that noise?" Bitwolf said, alerting them to a strange thumping noise in the distance.

Everyone looked around the village; it was Fishlegs who pinpointed where the noise was coming from. "Over there!"

At the far end of the village, a group of twenty Vikings were fighting to shut a door to a hut that looked like a stable for livestock. Instead of livestock being pushed into the enclosed stable, it was Toothless. The dragon already had a leather strap around his short, rounded snout, preventing him from opening his mouth to breath fire. They could see the Night Fury through a barred window; he was frantically trying to prevent himself from being encaged, but the twenty Vikings were too much for the likes of an angry Night Fury. The Vikings overpowered the dragon, and were able to shut the door and lock the dragon inside.

Stoick had never been so angry in his life. Seeing Toothless treated like this brought out an anger that he rarely showed in public. Toothless was his son's dragon, who displayed almost human-like qualities. That made the dragon a part of his family, and he did not take any threats, to his family, lightly. "Hey, what's the meaning of

this!"

Coming, seemingly, out of nowhere, a large group of Outcast Viking warriors surrounded them. Each one was wearing battle armor, and had their axes in front of them. There was no mistaking the threatening tone to their demeanors. "What's this? I demand to know what's going on!"

"I thought it'd be more clear, Stoick the Vast, of the Isle of Berk," Alvin said as he walked out of his personal hut. With him was an elderly Ethiopian woman, who wore a one piece dress made out of hide of some sort of furry animal. She was wildly unkempt; making Stoick wonder if she was some sort of witch doctor. "You have something we want, and I need you and your people out of my way until I get it."

"What could we possibly have that you would want?" Bitwolf asked.

"Your dragons, or course."

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Astrid followed the old woman to her hut. She was strangely unafraid of walking through the jungle. With all the dangerous dragons on this island, she walked through her jungle as if none of the threats were real. They were surprised, even more, when they arrived to her humble abode. It was simply a small hut made from the natural growing trees. There were no walls to this hut. In fact, there was no physical work done on this hut at all. It was as if she found this spot in the forest, and made it her home. The trees were perfectly placed to protect her from the elements. It was hardly a hut at all.<p>

"I've been expecting both of you, but much sooner than now." The old woman said, slowly lowering herself to sit down on a tree stub.

"I think you've got us mixed up with someone else. We're not from this island," Astrid said, trying to be as polite as possible. To live in this kind of shack, she was convinced the old woman was mentally 'out-of-it'.

"I know exactly who you are and why you're here, but I highly doubt that you know the actual reason why you're here."

Hiccup and Astrid gave each other a quick glance as if to suggest that they might be in trouble. There was no doubt in their minds that she was a crazy old woman, and perhaps coming with her to this 'hut' was not the brightest idea.

The old woman could tell what they were thinking. "You two come from an Island where Vikings and dragons live together in harmony, thanks to your brave actions," she said, pointing at Hiccup with her eyes. "The relationship you formed with the Night Fury is impacting the Viking way of life all over this territory."

Okay, so this crazy lady did know who they were and where they had come from. That did not explain how she knew that they were going to be on this Island. As if she could read their thoughts, the old woman answered their inquisition. "Your visit to this island was, by no

mean, an accident. I saw this day in my visions."

"Wait a minute," Astrid said. "You're a witch, aren't you?" The old woman was clearly not of Viking descent. She had heard stories of people who claimed to be servants of evil gods, or worse, one of the many types of giants. They threaten to use their 'powers', that their gods grant them, to manipulate people. Only children really believed that there could be truths to these myths. She believed there were logical explanation to any 'trick' that were able to do.

The old woman remained pleasant as she laughed. "I may dabble in a little soothsaying, but nowhere near the extent of my sister. I think you know who I am referring to, young Viking-chief." Her eyes again pointed towards Hiccup.

Now, Hiccup was getting uncomfortable. He had no doubt that she was referring to the old woman in his nightmares. How did she know about his dreams? "But... How?"

"Yes, I know about your dreams. Sad to say, that she's my sister."

"Your sister is responsible for Hiccup's bad dreams?" Astrid couldn't decide whether she was angered by this ridiculous notion that someone can implant dreams in a person's head, or that this woman's sister was attacking Hiccup's mind. She knew, more than anyone, what those dreams were doing to him.

"I regret it, but yes," she said, with a sigh. "I'm sorry, I'm being rude, can I offer you two a piece of fruit?"

Both the young Vikings shook their heads, to politely decline the offer. Neither of them could think of food at a time like this. What they were more interested in were answers; however, some of these answers this woman were providing were really hard to swallow. Hiccup seemed more open to what the elderly woman had to say, but Astrid was trying to put holes in these answers. So far, she was not having much luck. "I don't mean to sound rude, but why would your sister be planting these nightmares into Hiccup's mind?"

The old woman let out a soft sigh. "So many questions and so little time to answer them. There's not even time to show you around my home."

Astrid looked around, and saw nothing but open forest. She couldn't imagine how she lived in the open wild like this, with none of the comforts of a real hut among other people. This woman has lived all alone, with nothing but what grows in the wild. There's no wonder why this woman was a little "off."

"I was hoping that Stormfly would be able to bring you and your friends to me first, but my sister and her son are very powerful together."

"Her son?"

"Alvin the Treacherous," the old woman replied. "He did not earn his name by chance, you know."

"His mother is the witch in Hiccup's dream?"

"Yes. Alvin's father traveled across the globe and met my sister. Well, they fell madly in love, and were married soon afterwards. He brought my sister and I back to his tribe, but the tribe rejected us immediately on sight. They had a very strict code about marriage outside the culture, so they banished the three of us. We became outcasts among all the Vikings tribes."

"The Outcast tribe?" Hiccup guessed.

The old woman unsteadily waved her crooked finger at him. "I'm getting to that, young Viking-Chief. Don't be in such a rush," she gently scolded.

A minute ago, she said that there wasn't much time to tell her story, but now she was telling him not to rush. He decided to let her go at her own pace from now on; trying to figure her out would just get himself more confused and frustrated.

"They came to this island and made it their home. Alvin's father would create his own tribe of Vikings, the Outcast tribe as they are now known. Soon, other Vikings would come and join this tribe, though I'm not sure where they came from or why they even came to this island. As the tribe expanded, my sister would give birth to Alvin.

The old woman continued her story as she shook her head. "Alvin resented his parents for all his life; his father received most of his anger. When his father passed away, and he took up the mantle of tribal chief, he banished me from the tribe. At first, I didn't understand why he focused his wrath on just me, but it quickly became obvious that he was willing to put up with his mother, to get what he wants."

"And what does he want?" Astrid asked.

"At first, I thought he acquired his father's hate for the Roman Empire. I thought he wanted to renew the war between the Vikings and the Romans, but I believe there's more to it, deep down inside. I think he wants to renew the war to exact his revenge on all Vikings. I worry for his sanity; he will stop at nothing to get what he wants. He even stole three dragon eggs during his travels to rise up as his pets. On the first dragon that hatched, he tried to have his mother cast a spell on the hatchling, to give her the ability to speak Norse."

"Stormfly!" Astrid's eyes widen. She had always wondered how the Mood dragon got her ability to speak. Without realizing her, her disbelief in her story had dissipated. She was hanging on to every word she was saying, especially now that they were getting onto Stormfly's story.

"Correct. He was hoping that having pets that he could communicate with, he could control all dragons and force them to do his will. When Stormfly refused, he tortured the poor dragon, with intent to kill her. She was very fortunate to run away when she did. It took me a long while to get her to trust me enough to allow her to help her."

"That does explain why Stormfly disappeared on us and why she refuses

to step foot in the village," Hiccup replied calmly. "She's scared to death of Alvin."

"That dirty, low down, no good..." Astrid's face turned red as an uncontrollable rage came over her. Holding on to her ax until her knuckles were white, Hiccup quickly worked to calm her down before she started to swing that ax. "I'm gonna PULVERISE HIM!"

"Be wary, child," the old woman responded. "Alvin the Treacherous is very dangerous. After his experiment failed with Stormfly, he decided that obedience was more important than getting them to talk. So the other two dragons he hatched, he had his mother put a spell on them that would make them completely loyal to him. The other two dragons were Timberjacks, I believe."

"Wait, did you say two Timerjacks!"

This was news Hiccup was not expecting. He did not want to jump to conclusions, but it was hard to put aside the coincidence that it was also two timberjacks that attacked Berk. He turned to Astrid to see if she was coming to the same conclusion as he was. "You don't suppose..."

Her face was going from red to purple. He had never seen her this angry before. There was no doubt that she was coming to the same conclusion. "He sent those dragons to destroy our homes!" Reading her face, Hiccup knew that she was thinking about more than just their homes. She was blaming Alvin for what happened to her Deadly Nadder.

Hiccup had heard enough of the story. He was now convinced that they were in grave danger, and every moment they wasted here was another moment that Alvin might get wise to what was happening. "We've got to get back to the village! My dad and all our friends are in danger!"

"Oh, you all are in more danger than you possibly could realize!" The leaves of bushes started to bustle and Alvin stepped out from behind. He was not alone; Viggor joined him at his side, and a small group of Vikings surrounded the three of them. "Hello, Aunt Lanell. I think we're long overdue for a family reunion."

19. Chapter 19

Chapter 19: Imprisonment

Hiccup found the rope, which was tied around his wrist, to be very itchy; it was almost torture in of itself. Based on the way Astrid's wrists were fidgeting, he guessed that she found it just as uncomfortable. The old woman that they found was receiving the same treatment, which only confirmed to him that there was a lot of truth behind what she said. He could not believe that he had been so wrong about the Viking chief of the Outcast tribe..

"Whâ€"why are you doing this? Why do you want to restart the war with the Romans?" The old woman already told her what she suspected, but he wanted to hear it from his own ears."

"She told you about that, huh?" Alvin grinned. "Well, I'll let you

keep on pondering on that with what little time you have left."

Hiccup's eyes widen as well as Astrid's. Both of them realized what he intended for them, and it did not bode well with them. "What did we ever do to you?" Astrid protested.

Alvin the Tempter took a startling turn that even made Astrid flinch. There was a tone in his voice that suggested that this was a very personal matter to him, as if they had gone out of the way to hurt him. His anger was focused directly at Hiccup. His eyes were shooting daggers at him with extreme hatred. "What haven't you pesky kids done? I've been hard at work trying to mass an army of dragons, but your continual interference has driven me to these drastic measures."

Astrid noticed all of his hate was going towards Hiccup. It didn't take a genius to figure out why. "What could Hiccup possibly have done to warrant this madness?"

"At first, I was in search for a single dragon powerful enough to wipe out all of Rome. I then heard rumors that a Seadragonus Giganticus Maximus was discovered living in a dormant volcano on Dragon Island."

"The dragon queen?" Hiccup couldn't imagine that even Alvin the Treacherous would be able to tame such a monster. It was a highly intelligent beast that cared nothing but itself. It ate everything and anything that crossed her path. Even if Alvin did have a witch at his whim, Hiccup doubted that it would have made any difference at all.

"Yes, but you killed the beast days before I arrived to the Island. I was willing to let this little indiscretion slide, but you interfered, yet again! I learned that Ivar the Fearsome had discovered a Shadow Dragon." Ivar spoke with a facial gesture as if he was talking with a bad taste in his mouth. The thought of everything Hiccup had 'done' to him was filling him with vile hatred. "I was determined to find this dragon before he could slay the beast, but you had to go and kill that dragon as well, now didn't you?"

Alvin's anger took over as he stopped their parade back to the village. He rapidly reached out and grabbed him by his shirt. Defenseless to defend himself, he could do nothing but take the blow as the Viking chief delivered a massive shot to gut with his giant fists. The wind was knocked out of him, as he fell to the ground crouching with his arms covering his stomach. He almost started to see a bright light as he struggled to find away to get air back into his lungs before he suffocated.

"SON OF A... HALF-TROLL..." without any care of possible repercussions, she charged at the Viking chief, escaping the clutches of the nearest Viking who had tried to stop her attack.

Alvin swung the back of his hand, slapping her across the face with such force that she fell onto her rear end. It took her several seconds to overcome the dizziness she felt as the aftermath of his slap. Seeing the look on her face, he bellowed out a hardy chuckle. "There's nothing any of you can do now. Since your 'boyfriend' took

away my dragons, I will take away all of Berk's dragons... after I burn your village down to the ground, that is."

"Yâ€"you wouldn't!" She gasped, rubbing the side of her face which felt like a hundred needles pricking at the same time.

Alvin stomped towards and leaned down over her as means of intimidation. He had more on his mind, but Lanell, the old woman, stepped up to his side in a challenging manor. "You leave these kids alone!"

Alvin stood up straight and looked at his aunt with utter disdain. "You should worry about your own skin, old woman. These kids are about to be supper for the Furious. You should pray that you don't follow suit."

* * *

><p>The three of them were shoved into a wide, one story hut, where Hiccup's father and all of his friends were. It was a single story hut, with nothing on the inside except empty space. It looked like it was specifically designed to hold at least a dozen Viking-sized people as prisoners. He had to wonder why any village needed a prison in the first place; Vikings pretty much were very loyal to their people. Was it possible that he was ruling over his tribe using fear? That would suggest that not everyone in this village was happy with Alvin the Treacherous.<p>

Looking around at his friends, he saw that all of their wrists were tied in the same manner as the three of them. Gobber and his father looked relieved to see that he was still alive; his friends, however, did not seem so surprised. Perhaps they've already come to suspect that he had something to do with the mess they were now in.

"Thank Odin, you two are alright!" He approached the two of them until he saw the old woman being shoved into the hut with them as well. "Who's this?"

"She looks just like that ol' witch of Alvin's!" Gobber said, eyeing her suspiciously as he walk up to Stoick's side.

"It's... a long story, but... she's on our side," He assured him. He looked around to see that all the windows in the hut were boarded up, not allowing anyone to be able to see what was going on outside. "Did anyone see what they did with Toothless?"

The look on his father's face told him that he was not going to like the answer. If Alvin wanted to steal their dragons, then he feared that Toothless would be one of them. He prayed to the gods that the witch had not put a spell on his Night Fury yet. "We saw them putting him some kind of boarded-up, reinforced stable.

A sense of relief swept over him. At least they hadn't tried to brainwash Toothless yet. He didn't care what kind of magic the witch was capable of doing; he refused to believe that Toothless would allow himself to be bewitched into helping Alvin. He had all the confidence in the world that his dragon would give Alvin a fight that he would not be ready for.

"Will someone explain to me what's going on?" Snotlout asked. "We

were treated like royalty, and now look at us? What's up with the chief, anyway?"

Hiccup let out a soft sigh; he could imagine what his father's reaction was going to be. "To put it simply, he wants to burn down our village and steal our dragons."

Snotlout jumped to his feet. He had a strong connection with his dragon, Fireworm. To hear that someone wanted to steal his dragon made him just as furious as everyone else; he just was not that good at concealing it as others. "Steal our dragons? I'll give a him a punch in the lip if he thinks he can have Fireworm!"

"Yeah," Tuffnut agreed. "He's not getting my dragon, either!"

One word in that sentence, ruffled Ruffnut's feathers, and she was in no mood to let her brother get away with being a jerk, even now. "What do you mean, 'your dragon'?" Ruffnut growled, shoving him with her shoulder. "That dragon's half mine, as well."

"But mine's the better half; he breaths fire."

His arrogance knew no bounds. Even Hiccup could sense Ruffnut's wrath, and it caused him to flinch. "He? Our dragon's a she, NIMROD, and SHE can't make fire without my half!"

"What could he possibly want with our dragons?"

"Heâ€œHe wants to use them to start a war with the Roman."

His father grimaced in disgust. He was expecting it to be bad, but evidently, not this bad. "The Viking's insane! War will ravage our people, almost to the brink of extinction!"

His father was right. In the last war, many brave Vikings died. Yes, they were a resilient group of people, but for all their might, they could not compete with the growing powers of the Roman Empire. Of course, if Lanell was right with her suspicions, Alvin was fully aware of that. He wanted to awaken the Roman Empire, so they can exact his revenge on the very ones who betrayed him.

"Alvin's one sheep shy of a herd," Bitwolf mumbled. His father, Wolfbane, had his faults, but even he would not stoop so low as to send his people off to war to die. If his father had not been so hungry for power, Vikings like Alvin would vanish without the trace. Either they would go into hiding, or his father would make them 'disappear'. On the other hand, Hiccup was not sorry for what happened to Bitwolf's father; that Shadow Lord dragon was too dangerous to allow it to live, and Wolfbane had learned that the hard way.

"So he wants us out of the way so he can destroy our homes and steal our dragons?"

"It's worse," Astrid replied. "I think he means to feed us to something called the Furious."

"Furious? As in the pet dragon belonging to Surtur the Fire Giant?" His father believed in the gods, and perhaps a little of the legends of their wars against the giants, but at the same time, he was very

skeptical when it came to actually manifestations. Hiccup guessed that his father believed that they only existed in another realm. As it was, trying to convince him, the witch could use magic, was something Hiccup wasn't even willing to try. It would take away from other more important things... as in trying to get off this island alive.

"Whether or not the dragon is that very dragon, I can't tell you for certain, but be assured that the beast he's talking about is very much real. It lives in that volcano, and my sister foolishly believes that she can control it." Lanell commented.

"bâ€"bâ€"bâ€"bâ€"but I don't want to be dragon chow!" Fishlegs whined.

"Pssst!" a soft whispery voice came from one of the boarded-up windows. He could only see a shadow through the tiny cracks; not nearly enough to be able to see clearly who it was.

Stoick looked over at Hiccup, using his eyes to suggest that he was the town's 'hero' and that he should go see who was calling to them. Getting the message, he walked over to the window. "Hello?"

"You gotta help us!" The whispering voice belonged to a young boy.

"Uh, hello? Our hands are tied!" Snotlout said, waving his wrists in the air towards the window. He just happened to be sitting near the window, and decided to take the liberty to try to tell the kid off. The current predicament was making him bitter, and unable to comprehend that this could be an opportunity for them.

Astrid stepped forward and threatened him with a raised fist, causing him to flinch. She did not have to say anything to get the message across to him to keep quiet. The last thing they needed was Snotlout's foul mood to interfere and make things more difficult for them.

"Please!" The boy whispered. "Not all of us are like Alvin. Some of us are against him."

Hiccup was right; Alvin was using fear to rule over the people of the tribe. When returning to the village, he definitely noticed the drop in the number of Vikings around the village. All the kids were among the missing. "Why won't your people revolt?"

"They're not enough of us, not to mention that we're afraid of the witch. She has scary evil powers!"

Stoick huffed, still refusing to buy into the 'witch's' capability. "Your people really need to stop buying into those lies. Alvin wants you to believe them to keep you inline."

"No sir, her powers are real; we've all seen it. She can control weather and dragons. I've seen her cast illusions, but she didn't know I was watching."

There was no point letting this line of conversation continue. There was nothing the boy could say that would convince Hiccup's father. "If we're gonna' help, we're gonna' need your help. We can't do this

alone."

"Iâ€" From the way the shadow moved, it looked like the boy heard a noise and was looking elsewhere. "I have to go."

The shadow disappeared from the window with the sound of tiny pitter patter feet running from the hut, while the sound of an army of heavy pressed footsteps approached the door. The door swooshed open and Alvin stepped into the hut. "It's time."

20. Chapter 20

****Chapter 20: The Fury of The Furious****

Alvin and his Vikings brought Hiccup and the others to edge of village, near the foot of the volcano. With all the axes and swords pointing at them, there was very little opportunity for them to try to fight themselves free. They came to the edge of a cliff. It was not a very deep drop; they even had a rope ladder that could be used to climb down into the pit. Hiccup had troubles believing that it was natural made cavity; the walls circled around and ended at the steep incline of the volcano. The Outcast tribe must have worked many years on this pit. There appeared to be a large cave entranced on the side of the mountain.

Alvin pushed him towards the ladder as the rest of the Vikings kept his friends back. "Okay, Hiccup the Horrendous, you're the dragon whisperer. Let's see you work your magic." Alvin untied his wrists. The rope had been tied so tightly, that his they were slightly discolored. He rubbed his sore wrists as he looked back at his friends. Alvin was taking no chances; all of his friends were being bound by ropes to assure that did not try anything. If Alvin was anything, he was thorough.

Behind them, off in the distance, he could see the stall where Toothless was doing everything he could to break out of his prison. Letting out a series of furious growls and grunts, Toothless used his body as a battering ram. The Night Fury sensed that Hiccup was in danger, and was desperate to get out and help.

Alvin pointed the head of his ax at his chest, bringing Hiccup's attention back to his own situation. "Down you go!"

If the ax at his chest was not motivation enough, the weapons surrounding his friends and family was. Toothless was giving everything he had in escaping; Hiccup had to buy time until the Night Fury succeeded. Grudgingly, he obeyed, but he also did so at snail's pace. Whether Alvin was growing impatient with his delay tactics, Hiccup couldn't tell it by his posture. As he climbed down, he looked up and saw the very same witch from his dreams standing at the edge of the cliff. No doubt she was going to use her magic to control the dragon, or at least, fool herself into thinking that she's controlling it. Lanell, her sister, had her doubts that she could keep the dragon under her control for very long. Perhaps if he could survive long enough, the dragon would wake from the spell.

The moment his feet touched the bottom of the pit, one of the Vikings at the top pulled the ladder up, taking away his only means of escape. Being at the bottom of the pit had a much different feel to

it than being at the top. Down there, he felt submerged in the thick, oily slime of evil; he could almost swim through it. He had no idea what kind of dragon to expect, but something told him that there would be no reasoning with this dragon. If, by its mere presence, it could emanate this kind cloud of malevolence, then chances were that it followed only after its lust for blood. Yet, he held onto hope that what he was feeling was the witch's doing.

From up above, the old witch began to spew one of her nerve fraying chants. She spoke in a strange tongue, one that was clearly not Norse. Her voice echoed in the air, somehow being amplified in the process. At first, he still could not get beyond his doubt that perhaps this old woman was nothing more than a fraud, but as she spoke, the sound of thunder bellowed from the sky. Storm clouds evolved over a large area; Hiccup would guess that shadowed over the volcano and the entire village. Startling him further was red lightning bolts shooting up out of the mouth of the volcano and into the dark cloud.

He first feared that he was led down here only to have the Volcano erupt and the pit to fill with lave with him in it. That situation faded as the terrifying sound of a monstrous roar shouted from within the cave. The roar came from a gigantic dragon, there was no mistaking it. Yet, the type of roar sounded vaguely familiar. Within the pitch black inside the cave entrance, two small blue eyes glowed at the very top of the cave. It was enough to confirm that the dragon was as big as the cave, which was wide and tall enough to hold an entire legion of dragons. The pair of blue eyes was joined by two more, with each in-line and behind the first pair.

The Dragon had six eyes, and it was then Hiccup received the horrifying revelation of what kind of dragon the Furious was. He had indeed seen this breed of dragon before. His confirmation was quickly acknowledged, as the monster stepped out of the shadow and into plain sight. The Furious was another member of Seadragonus Giganticus Maxiums breed of dragons, just like the dragon queen on Dragon Island, only this one was even larger. Upon closer inspection, there was another thing that stood out: the dragon had no wings! In their place were the skeletal remains, which suggested that it probably lost them sometime during its lifetime.

* * *

><p>"Beard of Thor!" Gobber gasped, unable to believe what he was seeing. "They brought that beast back to life!"<p>

The looks on everyone's face, when they saw that beast come out of the cave, exposed that they all were thinking the same think. "No, the Furious is not the same beast that you encountered over two seasons ago, though it IS of the same breed. If rumors are to be believed, the Furious lost his wings in battle with that dragon. Since losing that battle, this dragon has had somewhat of an ill temper."

"Are these Vikings nuts!" Astrid shouted. "That dragon doesn't even need his wings to get out of that pit. It could just as easily jump out!"

Lanell looked out and saw the dragon look around. The dragon's eyes seemed to peer right at them, but they did not seem to recognize

their presence. The dragon let out another roar before turning his gaze towards Hiccup. "I believe my sister may not be controlling the dragon, as I first thought. I believe she may be casting an illusion to make the pit look deeper to it than it actually is."

* * *

><p>As the Dragon gazed its six eyes down at him, Hiccup could feel an icy chill run down his spine. The last time he faced one of these dragons, he had Toothless there by his side; that wasn't the case here. He was stuck in this pit, alone with this monster, with nothing to defend himself with and nowhere to run.<p>

The dragon tilted his giant head, as to figure out what he wanted to do with his prey. While the dragon figured that out, Hiccup took a few seconds to find some way out of pit. He had less time than he hoped searching for an exit. The dragon decided to play with his prey first, when he opened his mouth and began to form the flammable gas at the back of his throat.

"Whoa!" Hiccup took to running as fast as possible with only one good leg. The dragon unleashed a large, billowy, cloud of flames. Hiccup narrowly escaped the flames, tripping in the process. The Furious let out a deep gurgled in an almost mock-like chuckle. Scrambling back up onto his feet, he ran in the opposite direction, as the dragon prepared and to attack with another round of flames.

This time, the Furious took steps forward, pressing in and giving Hiccup even less time to escape the flames. After he avoided the flames from its second attack, the dragon stopped in order to catch a quick breath. Hiccup tried to take advantage of it, but the dragon stepped to the side and then took a leaping step forward. Hiccup found himself unable to change direction on time, and he found himself pinned up against the side of the pit, with nowhere to go.

The dragon almost smiled at his futile attempt to escape, but the time for fun had passed. It raised his head, ready to snap up his pint size snack when a small ball of flames came shooting out of the storm cloud, hitting it in the back of the head. The dragon roared in anger as he looked up to the sky. Swooping out of the black clouds, Stormfly zoomed towards the Furious. Her golden scales faded into a dark, war-like, blue, as she breathed out another puff of flames, which hit the dragon just above her back two eyes.

"Stormfly!"

* * *

><p>"Stormfly!" Astrid could not be any happier to see Stormfly at that moment.<p>

The presence of the dragon almost instantly brought chaos to the village. All the Outcast tribe Vikings became anxious as they saw their chief's plans start to crumble. Alvin probably saw this, or at least sensed the change, and it enraged him.

Stormfly flew across The Furious' face, distracting the dragon long enough for Hiccup to make his escape and run to the other side of the pit. Angered by the distraction, the Furious lunged his neck forward

and snapped his jaws, in an attempt to catch the dragon in its mouth. With a swift maneuver, she escaped his jaws with relative ease.

The giant dragon was quick to counteract, breathing fire at the allusive Mood dragon. Stormfly pushed herself as fast as her wings would take her... right towards Alvin. The Viking chief panicked, leaping to the right as Stormfly flew upward, past the edge of the cliff where he had been standing. The flames followed in pursuit, and scorched the earth in its wake.

Astrid and her friends watched as Stormfly took flight over the village. "Where's she going?"

After flying in a circle over the village, she dived to the ground with such ferocity, Astrid was afraid she was going to kill herself by crashing into the ground. Instead, with great elegance, she pulled up at the very last second to land on her feet with such force, that it through dust in the air. She landed directly in front of the Night Fury's stall.

Using her snout, she nudged the wooden beam across the door which prevented the door from opening. "Stop that dragon!" Alvin ordered.

All the Vikings that had surrounded Astrid and her friends were now running back into the village towards the stall. Stormfly saw the Vikings coming and let out a soft growl. With one final nudge, she again used her snout to push up on the wooden beam. It slid free and fell to the ground. The mood drank jumped back to allow Toothless to slam the door open.

The Night Fury leaped out of the stall like a ravaging Monstrous Nightmare. Bearing his teeth and spreading his wings, he let out an angry growl. There was a lot of rage built-up inside the Night Fury, and now there was going to be hell to pay.

21. Chapter 21

****Chapter 21: Fighting the Furious****

Toothless was a dragon gone wild! Weapon or no, there was no stopping an angry, charging Night Fury. He and Stormfly plowed through the Vikings easily by swinging their heads and tails, and swatting others with their wings. Vikings were flying left and right until they broke through the first wave of Vikings. Once he had a clear path, Toothless sped up towards the pit. While he focused on saving Hiccup, Stormfly carefully gnawed at the ropes the bound Astrid.

Having backed Hiccup up against the side of the pit, the Furious was more than confident that he had finally trapped his prey. He could not explain his overwhelming desire to devour this bite size morsel. It was an urge that had taken over ever instinct he had, and controlled him like a puppet. About to react on this mysterious urge, he was interrupted by a dragon's high-pitch howl. It rolled all three of his left eyes upward to find a black dragon lunging forward. It unleashed its blue fiery puff with surprising force, that when it hit him in the side of the head, the gigantic dragon stumbled sideway.

Toothless landed in front of Hiccup, who was beyond thrilled to see him at that very moment. "Toothless! Am I glad to see you, boy!"

The Night Fury hummed an agreement, his way of saying the feeling's mutual. With the Furious starting to wake up from his shock, Hiccup wasted no time mounting onto the saddle on Toothless' back. "Let's get into the sky."

Feeling the vibration of Hiccup artificial foot clicking into the clamp, Toothless prepared to leap into the sky. The dragon grown accustomed to Hiccup's movements on his back. He could feel his artificial fin opening when Hiccup pressed down on the pedal. Those little vibrations and motions were not so little when the young Viking had first fitted him with the new tail-fin. Now, he had grown to depend on them a little. Other than he just enjoyed Hiccup ridding on his back, it was the reason he rejected the self-reliant tail-fin after retrieving Hiccup's helmet during the holidays. Those movements were like an unspoken communication between them.

When he felt the left tail-fin expand, he was in the air faster than you could say 'Night Fury'. Regaining his senses, the Furious rushed to try to catch them in mid air, before they could get too far up into the sky, out of his reach. Still too low to maneuver away from the snapping jaws, Toothless knew that their only chance was to fly as fast as he could.

Hiccup came to the same conclusion. He leaned forward until his chest and chin rested on Toothless extended neck. Grinding his teeth, Toothless pushed himself to his limits to beat the clamping of the jaws before they were caught inside. The giant rows of teeth towered over and around them and began to shut. The giant dragon made one error, and Toothless knew it the moment he saw it. The monstrous dragon had come at them from too far at an angle instead up right in the center of the pit. That mistake gave Toothless the ability to angle himself as he narrowly escaped the jagged rows of teeth. Instead of hitting the side of the pit, which would have happen if not for the mistake, the Night Fury peeled around the Furious and flew behind his neck.

At that point, they enough momentum to fly out of the pit before the Furious realize where they had went. The swooped up over the ledge and that gave Hiccup his first look as to the situation at hand. All the Vikings that had surrounded his friends were laid out. His friends had finished freeing themselves, but a second wave of Alvin's Vikings had finished arming themselves and racing towards his friends. Stormfly was buying them time to free themselves, but something inside of Hiccup's gut warned him that things were about to take a turn for the worse.

* * *

><p>Alvin was losing control fast. With the young Hiccup and his Night Fury reunited, they had the momentum to run everything. There was only one thing he could do to assure that Hiccup and his friends were killed, but at the same time, his own people would end up dying at the same time. It was a sacrifice he was more than willing to make. Those that were loyal to him would know to leave this condemned village, and those that he had imprisoned for their defiance... well, they'd get what was coming to them. They'd burn along with this village. "Witch, release the Furious!"<p>

* * *

><p>The Furious was angry at himself for allowing the small black dragon, and the human get away. Having his prey escape from the pit, he was ready to return back to his home, inside the mountain of fire. Before he did, however, he saw the giant walls of the pit vanish before his eyes. Instead, the walls were nothing more than a step up. He was now looking out an entire village full of Vikings and two dragons, including the one that had escaped him just seconds ago.<p>

At first, he blinked all six of his eyes, not sure what to make of the sudden change of scenery. A sudden urge poked at him like a giant prodding rod. An anger was being stirred up inside of him, for no apparent reason; all the dragon knew was he had to attack that village. And attack it, he did.

* * *

><p>Astrid unfinished untying Ruffnut when she noticed the Furious. There was something about his movements that gave her pause. Lanell said that the witch was imprisoning the dragon by making it see an imaginary wall. Something about the way he was looking in their direction gave her great concern. Her distress was verified when the giant beast took a step towards the side of the pit. "I think now would be a very good time to run!"<p>

Lanell, rubbing her rope-burned wrists, studied the beast's behavior. The dragon was cautiously challenging the boundary of the pit. It was sniffing at the air which was probably where the dragon had originally thought the wall of the pit was, but was now finding that there was nothing there at all. "I think you're right." She had no doubt that her sister was temporarily unleashing the dragon to finish the job. Alvin was insane enough to tell her to do it.

Astrid looked up to the sky to see Toothless flying over their heads. She could see Hiccup looking back towards the Furious to see if the dragon was going to step out of the pit. Based on the look on his face, he also knew that the dragon was about to attack the village. She looked around the village only to find that the Outcast Vikings were already running for their lives.

"Get on my back," Stormfly told her as she bowed down low enough for her to be able to climb up on. "They're gonna need our help up there!"

She turned to Stoick, almost as if to ask for permission. As much as she wanted to, she also knew that her friends down here were going to need help as well. She had no idea where she could be the most useful.

As if sensing the conflict, Stoick took charge and took away any doubt that she might have had. "Astrid, you and Stormfly help Hiccup and distract the beast. We'll try to find and free any Vikings that Alvin might have imprisoned."

"Right." Feeling the release from her internal conflict, she leaped onto the Mood Dragon's back.

Stoick and the others ran back into the village as Stormfly leaped to the sky. The Furious had finally become comfortable with the new scenery to finally step out of pit. It bellowed out a threatening roar as to state his intention to destroy everything in his path.

Stormfly had found her way up to the sky and was now flying beside Hiccup and Toothless. "We need to distract the Furious before he burns this village to the down."

For the first time in a long time, Hiccup looked lost and almost afraid. "I don't know if this monster can be stopped. The last one was able to fly, and Toothless and I were able to get him to crash into the ground. This dragon can't fly and has all of the same lack of weaknesses."

Astrid remembered that day very well. That was the day Hiccup almost sacrificed himself for his tribe. The dragon queen was as frightening as this dragon was. She didn't know how he was going defeat a dragon of that size, yet somehow, Hiccup had found a weakness. Whether he knew it or not, he was very good at discovering weaknesses in dragons. For all of his social inhibitions, he was the smartest Viking she knew. "Let's just worry about buying your father time so he can find and free any prisoners Alvin may have; perhaps you'll find another weakness in the process."

Hiccup nodded in agreement; his moment of panic subsided, and sanity and logic returned. He could not afford to worry about defeating the dragon right now; this task was much more doable taking it one step at a time. "Okay. If this dragon is anything like the other, then it should be easy to keep his attention on us long enough for Dad to do what he need to."

"Got it," she said. She would be lying if she didn't admit that she was very apprehensive about facing the Furious. The dragon queen had nearly sucked her and her Deadly Nader down its throat. The thought of how easy it was for a dragon of this size to swallow them whole brought shivers down her spine. She had prayed to the gods that she would never see a dragon that size again. Apparently, her prayers went to the ears of Loki, instead of Odin.

Hiccup looked down to see the Furious fully out of the pit, and with no further hindrances between him and the village. There was no more to waste. "Here we go! Come on Toothless, let's give him a little Night Fury magic!"

Toothless grunted and commenced a dive-bomb towards the Furious. Building the flammable gas in the back of his throat, he let out a powerful explosion of blue flames into the face of the Furious.

* * *

><p>The attack enraged the already angry dragon and tried to catch them in his jaws. Instead, another fire attack hit him in the back of the head. He looked up to see a second dragon flying behind his neck, and out of his reach. So, there were two dragons working together. That's okay, two dragons were easily taken care of.<p>

* * *

><p>The Furious unleashed a mountainous wall of flames towards Hiccup and Toothless. The dragon already assumed that they were the brains behind the attack. Either that, or the witch had more control over the dragon than anyone had realized. The witch! How could he not have thought of that sooner? If she was controlling the dragon, perhaps cutting the link between them will turn the dragon away. There's only one way to find out. "Toothless, we have to find the witch."<p>

He didn't have to explain why; Toothless already knew what was in his mind. The Night Fury was the smartest dragon Hiccup had ever encountered. He had no idea if all Night Furies were as smart as Toothless; he had never encountered another. For all he knew, Toothless could be the last of his kind. He had always wondered about his history. Perhaps when time allowed, he could have Stormfly ask him and find out if there are any other dragon like him.

Hiccup looked around for Astrid and Stormfly only to find them flying slightly elevated from them off to the right. "Astrid, we've got to attack the witch. Break the link between her and the Furious."

She gave him a concerned look; she was having the same concerns about the plan as he was. If they did break the spell the witch had over the Furious, who's to say that the dragon would not go crazy and destroy everything anyway? The spell maybe the only thing keeping it rational. An irrational dragon could complicate matters even more. He could only hope that he was not making a bad decision.

22. Chapter 22

Chapter 22: Outcast Chaos

The witch was well hidden from the action. That had to change. Toothless knew what their target was, and he was pushing himself, as hard as he could, towards the witch. Unfortunately, they failed to achieve the surprise Hiccup was looking for. Seeing them come after her, the witch changed her chant. The Furious responded by putting himself between them and the witch. If there had been any doubt of the old woman's control over the massive dragon; it had all just been laid to rest.

"Whoa!" Hiccup yelled as Toothless had to make a quick swerve to avoid flying into the mouth of the roaring, giant dragon. With his attack aborted, his mission was now to keep the giant dragon's attention on him; perhaps Astrid will have better luck getting through than he did.

He tried to fly Toothless in small pattern, staying in the line of sight of the Furious. The dragon was easy to distract, but the problem was that the witch wasn't. Coming in at different angle, Astrid and Stormfly made their attempt on the witch. The furious swung his head in their direction and attacked back with a missive cloud of flames. They had to cease their attack or risk being incinerated.

So much for going after the puppet master. The witch knew that a weakness had been spotted and that he and Astrid were figuring out a way to exploit it. Like a turtle, she had sucked herself into an impenetrable 'shell', and now getting to her was going to be much harder. What in Odin's name were they going to do now?

Odin had to have been listening, for the moment that mental prayer entered Hiccup's mind, he noticed something overhead severely blocking the light of the sun. He looked up to see a heard of dragons on approach. All the familiar dragon species were there present including Monstrous Nightmares, Terrible Terrors, Gronkles, and, Deadly Naders, both one-headed and two-headed Zipplebacks. There was no mistaking it: these were Berk's dragons! He had no idea how, or why, but they had come all the way from back home to come to their rescue. The herd of dragons went right to work, harassing the Furious and flying circles around its massive head.

* * *

><p>"What in Thor's name?" As first, Stoick feared that Alvin had summoned more dragons to fight back with. There was no other explanation. However, that fear quickly subsided when a handful of dragons departed from the heard, carrying Spitelout and other Berk Vikings, including the ones that were left behind on the Island's shore.<p>

As soon as his dragon touched ground, Spitelout jumped off to meet with his older brother and Gobber. Stoick was still getting over his shock. "What... how...?"

"You sent a ship to find Ivar? Well, somehow, a storm got them all turned around and they found their way back to Berk. After hearing their stories, and fearing the worse, I came here with our dragons. It appears that it was a good thing we came we did."

"Aye," Stoick replied. Beside him, Hiccup's friends were ecstatic to be reunited with their dragons.

"Heeeeeeey, Fireworm!" Snotlout greeted his dragon with a stern scratching of the neck. The Monstrous Nightmare had an affinity for having his neck scratched. That was the first thing the dragon wanted as the two of them were reunited.

Fishlegs was just as excited to see his Gronkle, Horrorcow. The moment the dragon spotted him, he flew almost like an arrow shot from a bow. Unfortunately, the dragon had always had a hard time stopping, and this time was no different. Horrorcow collided, face first, into Fishlegs. "Horrorcâ€™Umph!"

"Awesome!" Tuffnut cheered as he and his sister were greeted by their Hideous Zippleback. The dragon's two necks weaved and swerved in joyous celebration to see their masters again.

* * *

><p>This was the witches fault! Her incompetence was costing Alvin everything. With all of Berk's dragons coming to village, all of his plans were falling apart. He couldn't comprehend how this could have happened. He heard all the stories, and made doubly sure he did not underestimate Hiccup and his friends. Yet here he was, amidst another rally, but this time at his expense.<p>

No! Defeat was not an option. He was not going to let the little runt get away this easily. No matter what the result of all this was, that boy was going to die, even if he had to do the act himself.

* * *

><p>Bitwolf had no dragon to fly. While the others took to the air to help Hiccup and Astrid with the Furious, he was left alone. With the reinforcement of adult Vikings, he was kind of lost in the shuffle. This was good, because he was about to attempt something he knew everyone would have objected to. He decided to go after the old woman.<p>

With all the commotion going on, he ran towards then around the closest hut. After making sure that no one saw him, he followed the back walls of the last two huts in the village. That was where the witch had anchored herself down. As he was coming to the end the second to last hut, he could see back of the old woman facing him. Her attention was up in the sky with all the dragons flying around.

All he had to do was walk beside one more hut for she was in striking distance. With a hammer in hand, which he taken from one of disarmed Outcast Vikings, he quietly stepped towards the old witch. Just a few more steps and he would have a clear shot at taking her out of the equation. If all went right with his plans, the Furious would no longer be a threat to them.

He raised the hammer over his shoulder, ready to strike the first opportunity he got. He only got two steps when an unseen hand grabbed hold of his hammer and pulled it out of his. Bitwolf spun around to see Viggor standing there with a grin on his face. "Now, what were you thinking in that dense little brain of yours?"

* * *

><p>There were too many dragons in the air for the Furious to handle. Now that Snotlout, Fishlegs, and the twins were in the air with their dragons, they were able to coordinate the dragons better. Hiccup could see the strain that the number of dragons were putting on the witch's magic. It wouldn't take much more to, completely, sever the connection between her and the Furious. All he and his friends had to do was step up the effort just a little more.<p>

"Hiccup, look out!" Astrid's voice called. In all the confusion of the moment, he was unable to identify where she was or where the danger was coming from.

He had no idea if Toothless was responding to Astrid's vocal warning, or his dragon instincts were on full alert, but the dragon reacted with a slight dive to his right to narrowly avoid the talons of a Timberjack. Everything was a blur for a few seconds after that initial attack, but once Toothless leveled out and after Hiccup could spend a few seconds to refocus, he turned to see Alvin the Treacherous riding on the attacking Timberjack. There was no mistaking it; that was one of the two dragons that had attacked Berk.

Behind the Alvin and his TImberjack, Astrid and Stormfly were racing to catch up to try to help Hiccup. Unfortunately, the second Timberjack came flying out of the forest an immediately went after them with a fierce vengeance. The attack forced them to pull away and lead the new Timberjack away from Hiccup and Toothless.

Now that he only had to worry about Alvin and his Timberjack, it was time to test the Outcast chief in how versatile of a dragon rider he was. Hiccup remembered reading about this breed in the Book of Dragons. Their wings were so sharp, that they could cut through tree trunks when it glides. Under most circumstances, it was wiser to confront this dragon up in the air rather than through the forest, but Hiccup was more than confident that Toothless can out run the dragon while dodging tree trunks. If he was wrong, though, they would be in danger of being crushed by falling tree tops. "Toothless, let's see how fast that Timberjack can go through the Forest."

* * *

><p>Astrid and Stormfly were successful in getting the second Timberjack to chase after them. Now the issue was to find a way to take the dragon out of the fight. Clearly, Alvin deemed the two Timberjacks as his personal dragons; taking one of them out of the fight could deliver a crippling blow to the Viking chief.<p>

"We got the dragon to follow us, now what?" Stormfly asked. Astrid picked up on slight sound of hesitation in her voice. Her whole body was dark blue during this whole battle, but the moment the Timberjack started to follow her, the dark blue started to fade into a light green. Stormfly was nervous. Perhaps she was uncertain in her abilities to take on a Timberjack, or maybe it was the fact that the persuing dragon belonged to Alvin, himself. She could be fighting her inner fear of Alvin, in a desperate move to save Astrid and her friends.

"I think I've got an idea. Swing around and head back."

* * *

><p>As quickly as Viggor had taken it away, he had the ax poised underneath Bitwolf's chin. His smirk was glowing brightly as if to brag of his premature victory. "You think I'm dumb, boy? I know who you are, and more importantly, I know who your father was. Wolfbane was a good friend of mine. What I don't understand is why you disgrace the memory of your father like this."<p>

Bitwolf knew what Viggor was trying to do. Viggor was going to try to talk reason him into joining Alvin's cause. Bitwolf was no dummy; he long suspected his father might have been hiding something like this from him. Back then, he cared less about any secrets his father was keeping.

Having spent the past months with Berk, it was like having blinders taken of him when he never knew he was in the dark. His first few months were not easy on him or Hiccup and his father. Bitwolf was far from responsive to what they were trying to do for him, and even less appreciative of it. He had intentionally came to close to insubordination a handful of times, in hopes of being kicked out of Berk. He had no such luck. His father, Stoick, was easily enough provoked to anger, but Hiccup was completely the opposite. Every time his father was ready to kick him off the island, Hiccup would stop him. There was no getting that young Viking angry. It was that long-suffering personality that really broke through Bitwolf's hard exterior.

So now Viggor was probably sent by Alvin to try to undo all the 'damage' that's been done to him. They're going to be sourly disappointed with his answer. "So, my father did have ties with Alvin the Treacherous. I can't say I'm surprised. I suppose there was some filth that my father was too embarrassed to tell me about."

"It's a shame, really," Viggor grunted. "You had great potential, but now you're gonna have to be disposed of just like your friends."

23. Chapter 23

Chapter 23: Freedom for Furious

Bitwolf barely dodged the blade of the ax. Viggor proved to be surprisingly fast for someone of his weight. He wasn't being direct with his attacks either, which meant this was not necessarily about killing him; it was about attracting attention. It worked like a charm; the witch was now keeping a cautious on them; she was now fully aware of his intentions. He had lost the only advantage he had in trying to free Furious from her control. Now, he was in a fight for his lift with everyone too busy to lend him a hand.

He dodged another swing of the ax, but as he did, his foot got caught-up on a tree root sticking out of the ground. Had that tree root always been there or was this more magic of the witch? It didn't really matter to him at that moment, as he staggered towards the back wall of one of the wooden huts. Fighting the weight of his body and gravity, he struggled to stay on his feet, and hoped to reach the hut to balance himself before he fell flat on his face.

He was successful, and he placed the palm of his left hand onto the wall to steady himself, but a flash of instant regret hit him as if Thor, himself, shot a lightning bolt at his brain. It dawned on him that he just made a deadly mistake; he allowed himself to get pushed up against the wall, giving the Outcast Viking the chance to finish himself off. There was no room to escape; only the gods could save him now. Realizing victory was at hand, Viggor pressed in, blocking all possible escapes routs. Pinned, with his back to the wall, Bitwolf he could lift up a prayer to Odin as the hefty Outcast Viking raised his ax over his head.

A loud crash echoed through the forest behind Viggor. The noise was close enough to draw his attention behind him. It sounded like several giant trees falling to the earth, with the loud ripple of braches and leaves. The trees were shakings as if in fear.

"What in..." Viggor had no time to access what was happening or what was coming their way. A fireball shot out of the blackness towards them.

* * *

><p>Viggor and Bitwolf barely had enough time to run and escape the flames, as it collided into the hut, catching the whole structure on fire. The witch's attention was nearly complete towards this new development, sensing that this was not going to go in her favor. Her feelings proved to be correct, as Astrid and Stormfly came out of the forest, and made a sharp turn towards her.<p>

The Mood dragon prepared to launch an attack on her, so she had no choice but to refocus Furious' attention. The giant beast swung his head around towards the attacking dragon and lunged forward to try to catch her and her rider in his jaws.

* * *

><p>"Alright, Stormfly, let's do it... NOW!" Astrid said loudly. She was inexperienced in flight maneuvers compared to Hiccup, so she prayed to Odin and the gods that this worked or she would be dragon food.

Stormfly peeled off, sharply, heading back into the forest. Zipping out of the Forrest in hot persute of them was the Timberjack. The dragon failed to see them reenter the forest, and even more devastating for the dragon, it failed to see the trap that had been set until it was far too late. The jaws of Furious clamped down, and instead of catching Astrid and Stormfly, he caught the left wing of the Timberjack, who wailed in terror, flapping its right wing frantically. Annoyed by the turn of events, Furious angrily swung his neck, and threw the Timberjack into the side of the mountain. He bellowed out an ear-deafening roar as he turned to look back into the woods.

Furious knew that the Mood dragon went to hide in the thick forest. He was deciding whether he should wait it out or continue his reign of destruction. His decision was made for him as a ball of red flames shot out from the darkness of the woods, and hit him in his giant nostrils. His shook his head and snorted, as the flames tickled his nostrils. Another fire ball came at him, this time hitting him in the forehead between his right set of eyes and his left. Now, he was angry. Annoyed by these cowardly attacks, the giant monster raise his head and pulled back his neck, as he took a deep breath. All six of his eyes widened as a large mass of dark, flammable gas gathered at the back of his throat.

* * *

><p>"No, no, no!" The witch screamed. The dragon had allowed his anger to get the best of him, and now he was about to launch a massive fiery assault. The problem was that she was directly in the line of fire. There was nothing she could do to stop it; once a dragon had gathered that much flammable gas in their mouths, they had to expel it or risk serious injury to itself.<p>

If she tried to keep control of the dragon, she would perish in flames. She had no choice but to surrender her power over the beast and run for her life, and that's exactly what she did.

Furious unleashed his massive river of flames, and all the trees and huts, near and in it, caught ablaze. It was an attack of apocalyptic proportions. The billowy flames went almost as tall as the dragon, himself, and it left death and destruction in its wake. The flames would only be the beginning, as the forest surrounding the village began to catch fire.

* * *

><p>The fire gave Astrid and Stormfly no choice but to abandon their

hiding place. However, they had another option than flying towards the giant beast. They raced against the flames towards the tree tops. They plowed through the branches and leaves and punctured their way out and into the sky. A fresh sensation of relief swept over Astrid as they left the intense heat of the burning forest to be greeted by the cool, crisp, breeze of the sky.<p>

Far from the reaches of Furious, she looked down to see if their little worked. It was hard to see through the flames that were starting to spread, but the witch was nowhere to be seen. Turning her to Furious, she noticed that the dragon was moving erratically, as if he had just woken up to found himself in the middle of sleep walking. He looked around, dazed and confused.

"Hold on to my neck, tightly!" Stormfly said as her scales changed colors from dark-blue to her normal golden-yellow.

"What are you gonna _Dooooo!" _The Mood dragon flew down steeply towards Furious. Astrid leaned forwards as far she could and help tightly to her neck. She anticipated that Stormfly was about to go on the attack again, but instead, the Mood dragon growled loudly followed by a series of grunts and groans. Was she _TRYING_ to reveal their location to Furious? Wouldn't it wiser to keep the element of surprise on their side?

The giant monster tilted his head to peer up to them with his right three eyes, and then replied with a series of roars and grunts of his own. That's what Stormfly was doing... she was talking to him. "What 's going on? What did he say?"

"He's a little disconcerted, not quite sure what's going on," Stormfly responded. "He's also angry with the dark-skinned old woman who was able to force him to do her will. He is grateful for our assistance in freeing him."

Furious turned his back towards the village and stepped back down into the small pit as he made his way back into the cave on the foot of the giant volcano. Stormfly was right; the monster was nothing like the dragon queen at Dragon Island. He had no interest in the destruction that the witch forced him to cause. All he wanted was to be left alone.

* * *

><p>Bitwolf was astonished to watch the giant monster depart from the village. The gods have indeed answered their prayers; the spell was broken, and the dragon turned out not to be as violent as the one on Dragon Island. The tide had finally turned, and it was only a matter of time before Alvin, and those faithful to him, would be apprehended.<p>

Three times now, have Hiccup and the Vikings of Berks overcome impossible odds to not only just to survive, but thrive. One time, it could have been just luck, two... it could have been a coincidence, but three times? It was almost as if Hiccup had been anointed by the gods, themselves, and destined to greatness. Up to this point, the gods had been nothing more than just stories to him, but it was near impossible to say that now. Perhaps they were not as fictional as he had assumed.

"Arrgh!" an angry cry came from his left.

Bitwolf turned to see Viggor charging at him with the rage of an angry bull. The ax, which he stole from Bitwolf, was raised over his head and ready to take to be used to snuff out the young viking's life. An angry grunt came from his right. Landing there was Stormfly with Astrid on her back. He knew exactly what to do.

He dropped to the ground, landing on his chest, as the Mood dragon spun around and whipped her tail. Viggor was slapped across his chest, sending him stumbling, backwards. He ended up tripping over his own feet, and fell onto his back.

"Bitwolf, I need another pair of eyes with me in the sky to find Hiccup and Toothless. We have to help Them!"

He was honored beyond words that she had come to him for help over everyone else. Even though there was a peace between them, trust had not been established as of yet. While working with his father against the Vikings of Berk, he had tried to woo her away from Hiccup. When she found out what he and his father were trying to do, she knocked him out cold. He was afraid that she would never forgive him after that. This was the first time she had actually addressed him directly, or let alone ask him for help, in the one or two seasons he's been stuck on Berk.

He smiled up at her as he accepted her hand and help up onto the mood dragon's back. "Are you strong enough for two of us on your back?" He asked the mood dragon. Stormfly was not a large dragon, by far, and she did not appear to be as strong as Toothless.

"You just watch me" Stormfly said with a grin on her face.

She leaped up, showing more strength than a dragon of her stature should have. With her wings working hard, she began to ascend to the sky. Viggor, was back on his feet and was now charging at them with his ax. Out of desperation, he swung his weapon in hopes of getting them before they made it to the sky, but the blade of his ax narrowly missed the dragon's abdomen. The dragon had just barely gained enough height to avoid the attack.

"No!" he growled bitterly.

He had failed to even dispose of a single, young Viking, and he could only imagine the fury Alvin would have towards him. He had to find some way to make up for his failure; he could not let things stand the way they were. He turned to head back to the heart of the village. If he could not dispose of that young, traitorous Viking, he could at least dispose of this Gobber. It would be great to be the one to kill him after putting up with him for the past day or two.

Before he knew what was coming, a small stone hammer, came pounding on his helmet with such force, his eyes rolled upward and he collapsed forward into unconsciousness. Standing triumphantly over him was Gobber, with the blacksmith hammer attachment connected to his prosthesis. "Hehehe, I've been waiting to do that for a long time!"

As much as he wanted to, he could not spend any time enjoying the

moment and gloat, there were other Vikings had to be taken care of, and huts to evacuate. "Hiya!" He bellowed out his war cry as he ran into the heart of battle.

24. Chapter 24

Chapter 24: Alvin's Demise

Dodging another flame attack from Alvin's Timberjack, Toothless managed to twist in such a way to allow Hiccup to notice the forest catching on fire. It was spreading rapidly, threatening to wrap around the entire village. Having flown near the volcano, the stench of sulfur was becoming stronger; the mountain was on the verge of eruption. If the flames were allowed to surround the village, there would be no escaping the mountain's wrath.

"We've got to stop those flames from spreading," Hiccup said to Toothless. He had no idea what the Night Fury could understand and what he couldn't. It really didn't matter all that much; he thought of Toothless more as a friend than a dragon. Somehow, communication between them had never been much of a problem. "You know what to do."

Toothless grunted. If there was anything dragons were experts in, it's fire. Every fire breathing dragon knew how to start fire, but only the most intelligent knew how to extinguish them, and Toothless was one of those super intelligent dragons.

Toothless pushed himself to fly faster, racing against not just Alvin and his Timberjack, but against the flames that were trying to surround the village. Taking a deep breath inward, the Night Fury built up as much ignitable gas as his throat could handle. When his lungs could not withstand the pressure any longer, he unleashed a flurry of blue, fiery puffs. The series of puffs ripped through the forest, leaving a large patch of scorched earth and burnt trees.

When the fire reaches the scorched earth, the fire would have nothing new to feed on, forcing it to find another path. It would slow the wild fire down, but not much time unless he could feed it where it has already feasted. Hiccup looked back to see if Alvin and his dragon were still following. When he saw that he was, he pressed softly on the pedal, and he and Toothless made a sharp U-turn and flew towards the flames. The Timberjack followed pursuit.

Whether Alvin the Treacherous knew what he was doing, or he if he was acting on an uncontrollable impulse to destroy him, Hiccup could not tell. It really didn't matter either. Enduring the extreme heat of the flames all around them, Hiccup looked back to see the Alvin and his dragon still hot on their trail. The wings of the Timberjack sliced through the burning trunks, severing the tree tops, and dropping them into the flames. That should give the fire something to consume to slow the fire down.

Hiccup gave another look behind, to confirm Alvin was still cooperating, but he found himself surprised when he saw that they had cut off the chase and were nowhere to be seen. Had the fire been too much for them, or did Alvin have something more sinister in mind? He had no idea what to expect from him now. The only thing for certain,

now, was that fire had to be the last of his concerns. It provided too much advantage for Alvin to sneak up on him. With the searing heat starting to become suffocating, Hiccup knew that they had to get out of the burning forest.

"We've lost them. Let's head back to the village and get further up to give us a better view around us."

Toothless understood and grunted. Feeling Hiccups prodding, he took that as a sign that said that he was ready to break through the flames. The Night Fury cut through the walls of flames as quickly as he could and dodged through a few rows of trees before reaching the openness of the village.

Hiccup felt the wall of cool air hit him with fervor intensity. The sudden change of temperature was very disorienting; it took a few seconds to gather his wits.

When the cobwebs cleared in his mind, he noticed all the chaos that had taken the village hostage. There were Vikings running all over the place. Some were Vikings who were fleeing the village after being rescued by Berk's Vikings. Others were Outcast Tribe Vikings running away from a pursuing Dragon. There was Ruffnut and Tuffnut, chasing and Outcast Viking on their Zippleback. The twin Vikings were busy heckling the Viking while chasing him down. "Hey, come back here! I want you to meet our dragon!"

Elsewhere in the village, there was Snotlout on his Monstrous Nightmare also chasing down an enemy Viking. Like the twins, he found great pleasure in the way things have turned to their favor. Hiccup still wished that they would cool it with the bragging just a bit. "Hehe! Now who's the bad Viking around here?"

Fishlegs did not have one mean bone in his body, so he wasn't surprised to see that he wasn't gloating about the turn of events, nor was he surprised to see His Gronkle running amuck and flying so crazily, that the young Viking was barely able to hold on. There was so much going on, that dragon had no idea what to do or who to chase. "Waâ€"waâ€"wa-whoa!

Looking around, he had no idea where Astrid and Stormfly were. As they put more distance between them and the ground, he still could not find them. Even more worrisome was the disappearance of Furious. Where had that monster gone? A fear began to swell up inside of him; something told him that they had taken on the beast, themselves.

Before his brain could formulate on his next course of action, he felt the rays of the sun, shining down on the nap of his neck, being blocked. The coolness of a large shadow took the place of the warm sun. He had no time to turn to see what was blocking the sun; a large claw grasped his right shoulder and most of his chest and upper body. A sudden pull and the iron foot-clamp was ripped out of his wooden, artificial limb.

"Noâ€"noâ€"noâ€"no!" He screamed as the Timberjack hoisted him away towards the volcano.

With no pilot to control his artificial tail-fin, Toothless squealed out of shier freight as he spiraled down towards the ground. The

Night Fury tried everything to fly on his own power, but with only half a tail-fin, it was impossible to regain flight. He fell all the way down before crashing through the roof of an abandoned hut. The impact was painful, to say the least, and it knocked the wind out of Toothless. He laid there, in the wreckage, for a minute, and shook his head to clear away the stars dancing around his eyes. He couldn't be sure what had just happened.

Being carted off by the Timberjack towards the volcano, falling down to his death was the last thing on Hiccup's mind as he futilely struggled to break free. He could only imagine what Alvin was planning, and he knew he had to find a way to escape this mess quickly. As the Timberjack weaved through a sea of dragons to get to the mountain, his instincts were to grab hold of something to hold himself steady, but he could not access his arms while in the dragon's grip.

As they approached the mountain, the smell of sulfur became almost overwhelming. As they approached the lip of the mountain, fear began to take hold of him. Was Alvin just going to drop into the burning lava that was building up in the volcano? Had Alvin finished playing games and going to end this right here and right now?

His heart raced in terror as the Timberjack released him. Expecting to see the gods at any second, he was surprised when he landed on the edge of the mountain. His body was shaking, still not convinced that he was still alive. Still sensing that his life was in great danger, he managed to climb onto his hands and knees where he dared to take a brief glimpse down the throat of the volcano. The bubbling magma was high up the mountain's walls; he could almost feel the gurgling of the mountain's stomach; a sure sign that it was getting ready to erupt.

The Timberjack hovered above the edge of the mountain long enough for Alvin to dismount; in his hand, he wielded a giant double-edged ax. "Now, young Viking, we finish this!"

He charged at him with fierce Viking ferocity, with his ax poised over his head. Hiccup struggled to climb to his feet, but his broken prosthesis made it near impossible. He was barely able to stumble out of the ax's reach. Alvin swung his weapon a couple more times, but Hiccup stumbled under and around those swings as well. After the last swing, his stumble led into a trip, and before he knew it, he was tipping stumbling over the edge. How he did it, he had no idea, but his instincts to survive allowed him to reach up and grab the ledge, temporarily saving himself from death.

Alvin laughed at the turn of events. With victory at hand, he stood over him gloatingly. He intentionally placed the toes of his feet inches from Hiccup's finger tips, the only things that kept him falling into his oblivion. "Isn't this ironic? Just like you, everything you've accomplished is about to go up in flames. The Vikings will go to war with Roman Empire and will be wiped out. They will pay for everything they've done to me, and the only one who could've stopped me is about to be dropped into a volcano. Prepare to spend eternity in Helheim!"

The heat was excruciating, and was quickly eating away at his strength. The lava below him was inviting him to a quick, painless death instead of an agonizing one at the hands of Alvin's ax. Neither

choice appealed to him, but it was an impossible choice that he was now being forced to make. The time to make that choice was now over; Alvin raised his ax over his head.

An unusual breeze tickled the back of his neck, distracting the Viking chief from claiming his victory. A repeating whooshing sound put his senses on alert, as he slowly turned around. Right there, in his face, was Stormfly. Not giving him the chance to use his already elevated ax, she unleashed a stream of fire.

The moment of desperation would be his downfall. The fire coming for his face made him forget where he was. Instincts took control, and he stepped backwards to avoid the flames, only to slip over the ledge. "No!" he screamed, waving his arms as he fell past Hiccup and down towards the lava.

Piercing through the liquid fire, Furious shot his head out and opened his jaws. There was nothing he could do; he fell right into his mouth and the massive jaw slammed shut with violent _SNAP_. As quickly as he appeared, the dragon pulled his head back down underneath the lava.

Hiccup couldn't be sure what just happened. The dragon apparently swallowed Alvin, but why didn't it come after him as well? With six eyes, how could the dragon not have seen him? All it would have taken was a hardy jump. Whatever the reason, he was glad that to be ignored, for once in his life.

He looked up to see Stormfly hovering overhead. After some dangerous maneuvers and rescue preparations, Bitwolf was now dangling upside-down and underneath Stormfly; the dragon was using her claws to grab him by his feet. If he wasn't busy fighting his own weight and holding on to the ledge with every ounce of strength he had, he would have been more amazed by the maneuver.

Stormfly carefully hovered downward, lowering Bitwolf closer to the ledge of the mountain. "Grab my hand!"

"I can't!" Hiccup protested. He was barley capable of hanging on with two hands, let alone one. He could feel the dirt weakening underneath his hands. The dirt was about to give way and dump him to his fiery grave.

"Get me lower!" Bitwolf shouted up towards Astrid, forgetting that Stormfly could speak and understand Norse. It was the dragon that was doing the flying. The dragon didn't notice the unintentional lack of respect and commenced lowering herself ever further.

The dirt ledge crumbled, no longer capable of sustaining the weight that Hiccup was applying on top of the increasing heat that the rising lava was producing. Hiccup didn't have the chance to fall very far, for as soon as the dirt gave way, he felt Bitwolf's hand grab hold of his wrist. "I got him! Let's go!"

Astrid, watching the whole thing while sitting on Stormfly's back, felt her heart almost shatter when the dirt began to give way. It was only by the blessing of the gods that Bitwolf had luckily grabbed hold of Hiccups wrist when he did. A wave of relief came over her the moment she heard Bitwolf say those words. "Back to the village, Stormfly!"

The dragon was more than happy to get away from this mountain. The stench of Sulfur was nauseating and her head was starting to swim. She flapped her wings harder now to ascend higher to pull Bitwolf and Hiccup out of the raging mountain. Dangling uncomfortably by one arm, Hiccup looked down, and felt a surge of relief to see the mouth of the volcano getting farther away.

25. Chapter 25

****Chapter 24: Escape from Outcast Island****

Hiccup could not be any more relieved to be on the ground than he was right then. As he was softly lowered to the ground, he stumbled onto his one good knee, as the clamp part of his prosthesis was missing. As he struggled to find the balance he needed to stand on one good foot and his wooden peg-leg, Stormfly gently lowered Bitwolf to the ground. As soon his hands were on the ground, the young Viking rolled himself backwards onto his back before climbing to his feet.

By this time, Stoick, and all of Berk's and the friendly outcast Vikings were gathering around them, leaving just enough room for the Mood dragon to land so Astrid could dismount. Hiccup had just managed to find the perfect amount of his body weight to distribute to allow him to stay standing when Toothless plowed through the crowd of Vikings, and hopped his way towards him. The sight of his dragon hopping towards him was enough for him to lose his concentration on standing up, and he nearly toppled forward.

"Whoa!" Toothless arrived just in time to lower his head to prevent him from falling to the ground and to give him the support he needed to stand. "Thanks, buddy!"

"You're alright, son?" Stoick asked, relieved to his son safe and sound.

"Yeah," Hiccup replied, looking down at his damaged prosthesis. "But I'll have to find a way to build a stronger leg."

Gobber chuckled in his usual quirky manner. "Well, with our reinforcements arriving, we pretty much have everything under control. Victory is ours!"

Alvin's Vikings were the last thing they needed to worry about. "Uh, the danger is not over! We have to evacuate the village immediately! The mountain's about to..."

The ground began to rumble and shake. Fighting the Earth to stay on their feet, all the Vikings looked up at the volcano to see black dust shooting up into the air. The mountain had blown its stack as a large black mushroom cloud quickly expanded in the sky, blocking the sun and not only pouring darkness over the village, but releasing a light drizzle of ash onto the island.

"...blow," Hiccup finished his sentence with a sarcastic tone.

"Stoick, our boats are docks to the south; they're just a half day's journey from here," Spitelout announced.

A large piece of ash danced its way down only to land on Stoick's nose. He wiped it off, only to have it leave a gray streak across the bridge of his nose. He looked up at the top of the mountain to see lava starting to drool down the mountain. "Evacuate everyone in the city; get as many Vikings onto the backs of dragons as we possibly can. There's no telling how long we have before the full eruption. We have to fit everyone on the boats and get as far away from the Island as fast as possible."

Chaos immediately ensued. There was a mass rush out of the village, in the direction of the ships. At the same time, any dragons that did not have a rider on them were coming to the ground to get one. In all the rush, Astrid lost Hiccup for a brief moment. When she found him, he was helping several young Viking children on top of Toothless. "Hiccup, what are you doing?"

"Toothless and I are grounded with my broken prosthesis, besides, we need to get the children to safety pronto."

"But what about you? You can't possibly outrun the lava with only one good leg!"

Toothless moaned, as to agree with Astrid. The dragon was not thrilled about the idea of leaving Hiccup behind like this. They may not be able to fly, but he was lightning quick running on the ground as he was flying in the air.

"Don't worry about me; I'll be fine. I'm more worried about the children. In all the confusion, we can't afford to accidentally leave any of them behind," Hiccup replied helping a young Viking girl up onto the saddle, along with the other two children that had already been mounted. "Toothless, you have to get these children to safety. You can always come back for me after you get them to the ships."

Astrid let out a frustrated moan before she commenced helping the last two remaining children in the group loaded onto Stormfly's back. "Stormfly, you do the same!"

"I will, Camicazi!" The dragon replied.

Hiccup gave her a puzzled look, as if to say, _'What are you doing?_'_ He didn't have to say anything for her to know that he wanted to protest her decision, but he knew better than to try and stop her. "I'm not leaving you behind."

* * *

><p>There was a large exodus of Vikings pushing their way towards the shore. They were not racing against the lava, lava was always easy to outrun. They were up against a full eruption which may or may not occur. If the eruption happened, a large, black mass of searing, hot smoke would quickly engulf half of the island at the speed of a blink-of-an-eye. They had to be well away from the island before the eruption; there was no outrunning a volcanic eruption.<p>

Everyone, who went by foot, was keeping a fast, steady pace. The falling ash was already starting to affect everyone's breathing, causing occasional coughs and grunts. The ash could be just as deadly

as the eruption itself. Breathe too much of it in, and you would suffocate.

To the sky, some Vikings were on the backs of Berk's dragons as they sped past them, on their way to the boats. Even the wild dragons on the Island were fleeing in the same direction, to escape the pending doom. Bitwolf wish he had a dragon he could ride right now. Since joining the Berk tribe, he had not really clicked with any one dragon on the Island. Perhaps they were all disgruntled by his actions several months earlier. The dragons were not willing to forget very quickly. Right now, though, having a dragon to ride would make this trek a whole lot easier.

This journey to the shore was proving to be more treacherous than they had hopes. Trees tops were slowly catching on fire from the increasing heat, and a lot of fallen tree tops on the ground was forcing them to do some strenuous climbing. Bitwolf had just finished climbing a large tree trunk when he noticed movement to a small distance off the trail.

Curiosity got the better of him, as he cautiously weaved through the trees to see what the movement was. He didn't have to go very far off the trail to see that the movement was from a dragon. One of Alvin's Timberjack's had somehow gotten itself in a bind. Perhaps the chaos of the volcanic eruption had caused the dragon to get confused and get himself in this strange predicament. The chopped off tree tops had made that spot in the forest so thick, and somehow the dragon had gotten himself entangled in that small area, unable to extend his wings to escape.

"That must be one of Alvin's beasts," Gobber said as he walked up to join Bitwolf.

"We can't leave it here to die; we have to help it."

Bitwolf was surprised when Gobber hesitated. "That beast is too wild; there's no telling what Alvin did to the beast. If that dragon gets his wings free, he could just as well use them to cut you in half."

It was true, he didn't know if the dragon was under the same kind of spell as the Furious was, and would return his act of kindness with a quick and violent death. A few months ago, he wouldn't have considered helping and would have allowed the mountain to have the dragon. Somewhere down the line, he had become a new Viking. Given the chance again, he would not go along with his father's plan to rule over all the tribes.

The past was the past, and who he was and what he did no longer mattered; what mattered was who he was, now. He was not the type of person to let a helpless dragon burn to death; he didn't wish that kind of ending on anyone. "I'm helping him."

Before Gobber had the chance to stop him, he raced towards the closest tree trunk. If he studied the pile up correctly, this one trunk was the sole culprit of this dragon's predicament. If he could move this one trunk far enough, it may give the beast enough space to be able to break itself free. He first tried to push it with his two hands out in front, but it wouldn't budge.

Gobber watched the young Viking struggle for a minute before he sighed and shook his head. "Oy, you're doing it all wrong, lad! You gotta' put your back into it!" He stumbled to the trunk, placing his back up against it, besides Bitwolf. The young Viking did the same. "Now push!"

Together, they used their legs to push their backs into the trunk. Gobber, having a peg leg, stumbled slightly, but he managed to put enough weight on his peg to dig it into the ground a bit; it was just enough to give him the strength he needed. With their combined strength, the tree trunk started to budge.

It didn't have to move much; the slight movement was enough for the dragon to wiggle itself free from his trap. The Timberjack swung his neck throwing all the trunks behind him. Now free, the dragon spread out his razor sharp wings. Two Vikings had duck to avoid being sliced in half by the dragon's wings. After enjoying the sensation of stretching every muscle it had in his wings, he swung his neck towards the Vikings.

The dragon growled, baring its teeth, as it fixed its moon-slit eyes on the two Viking. Neither of them made any sudden movements; at this close range, there was no fending off an angry dragon. This was the moment of truth; was the dragon intelligent enough to recognize what they did for him and return their gesture by not killing them? Gobber was already formulating a plan to get Bitwolf out of the way if the Timberjack decided to attack. He had full intention of distracting the dragon long enough to keep the young Viking safe.

The dragon stared at them with murder in his eyes. It let out a few snorts, before whipping its neck away from them. With a solid flap of its wings, it hoisted itself upward and punctured through the flaming tree tops to the open sky above. As the dragon broke through the tree tops, it sent large, burning branches falling to the ground.

"Whoops! Time to go!"

* * *

><p>Astid used herself to help Hiccup walk. With his arm wrapped around her neck, they had synchronized their walking to be able to keep a steady pace ahead of the lava, which has already engulfed the village. The heat from the fire around them was suffocating. The sweat, from their brows, were irritating their eyes and causing them to turn red.<p>

They had no idea how far behind everyone else they were or how close to the shore they were. For all they knew, the chaos could have had them turned around and heading in the wrong direction. Neither of them would listen to their doubts and continued to press forward, anyway.

Almost as soon as they put those feelings aside, they came across a large blockade of stacked tree trunks in their path. With the lava fresh on their heels, there was no walking around this mess. They had no choice but to climb.

The look on Astrid's face told Hiccup that she was thinking the same

thing. There was no way was going to be able to help him climb this mess; he was on his own. "So what now?"

Hiccup shrugged, as if there was nothing to be concerned about. He could sense that she was thinking about his ability to climb this pile with his damaged prosthesis. Truth be told, he had his doubt that he could climb it, but he wasn't about to tell her that. "We climb."

Astrid prepared to climb when she gave him one last look. "I'll be fine, go!"

She started her climb without any further hesitation. She made quick work over the first two three trunks before checking up on him again. He was not able to make climbing those trunks look as easy as she did, but he was still making progress, even with only one good leg. Seeing his progress, she commenced climbing.

Even he had to be happy with the progress he was making. Having a pegged leg, mountaineering over these thick, tree trunks was not easy at all; there was nothing for his pegged leg to grab hold of for him to put his weight on and push himself up. He was relying mostly on his sub-par upper body strength. He never had very much arm strength in his life; it was only after he lost his leg when he started depending on his arm strength more. It had done wonders in increasing his physical strength, but it was still a far cry in comparison to your typical Viking. He was still the scrawny weakling of the tribe.

Astrid had raced all the way to the top of the pile as if this had been a race to the top. Hiccup had only managed to make it half-way when she stood up on the top of the pile, looking down towards him. That only added more pressure to him to make it all the way up on his own strength.

His muscles began to ach, protesting under great strain. His good knee was beginning to buckle, fatigued from overuse and abuse. A cold sweat began to drench his face as he realized that he was probably not going to be able to reach the top. His muscles were tightening up, getting ready to give up on him.

Astrid could see it in his eyes... he was in trouble. Sensing the situation, she knelt down onto her knees and reached down. "Grab my hand!"

He pleaded with his body to cooperate just a little longer. A few more steps and he would be close enough for her to grab his wrist. He gave everything he had in getting just a bit further up that pile. Finally, he was one step up away, but the step had to be taken with his pegged leg. As he took that final step, all of his strength in that leg gave out and his wooden stump slipped.

"Whoa!" Hiccup yelped as all the progress he had made had suddenly vanished. He found himself back down at the bottom, without the strength or time to try again. The lava flow was pushing its way towards him, as if it could smell blood for the taking. His muscles were spent; there was no way he could make another go at climbing the large pile. The time to find another rout around the pile had already expired; he now found himself trapped with no way of escape.

"Hiccup!" Astrid called down to him from on top of the pile. "Hurry up and climb!"

He looked up at her, and prayed that she was not going to be stubborn enough to listen to him. "Go on without me, I'll find another way around."

She didn't believe him, and she was THAT stubborn, to top it off. Before he could protest, she was already racing back down the pile and leaping down to the ground when she was about the half-way mark. "I'm not going anywhere."

Hiccup looked over to see the lava-flow inching its way towards them; it had both of them trapped with no way of escape. "Uh, maybe you might want to rethink that."

A deafening roar startled both young Vikings. The ground shook, and Hiccup first feared that the mountain was already about to erupt. When the series of shaking kept to a steady rhythm, he realized that it wasn't the mountain causing the ground to shake... it was something alive and very, big.

Furious came plowing through the burning forest, unaffected by the intense heat of the flames around him. Hiccup and Astrid stumbled away from the pile of tree trunks as the gigantic dragon pushed his way between them and their roadblock.

As if their circumstances had not been bad enough, now they had a giant dragon to deal with. With the lava closing in, they had very little hope of getting away if the dragon chose to attack. Perhaps that was what it was thinking, as well. He and Astrid were easy prey; the dragon was never going to get another opportunity like this again.

Furious looked down with his tiny eyes. As he swung his head, Hiccup and Astrid flinched, expecting the attack, but instead, the dragon used his head as a battering ram towards the stack. With one swing of its head, most of the fallen tree trunks had been thrown aside. The dragon roared as he departed as quickly as he came. However, as he left, he used his one of his hind legs to stomp upon the last remaining fallen tree on the path, completely crushing it into splinters.

The two young Vikings were left there, watching as the gigantic dragon stomped off. "Did he just help us?"

* * *

><p>Stoick was directing all the Vikings onto the boats, taking charge like any good Viking chief would. However, the main reason that he was still not on one of those boats was his concern for Hiccup. No one has seen him, and yet his dragon was already here at the shore. The fact that Hiccup was not with his dragon concerned him greatly. The fact that nearly everyone was now present and accounted for was only concerning him more.<p>

When the flow of panicked Vikings ceased, that was his confirmation that something was wrong. He turned around and grabbed his brother, Spitelout, by the shoulder. "See if you and a few other Vikings can

get Toothless onto the boat. I'm gonna look for my son.

"Right," he replied.

Stoick didn't have to move at all; the moment he took his first steps towards the forest, Hiccup and Astrid came stumbling out. "Thank Odin!" Stoick muttered under his breath.

Astrid helped Hiccup hobble along as fast as they could towards the boats. An eerie red glow swallowed the shadows of the forest as the lava flow and the flames were approaching the shore. Stoick waved his arm, urgently encouraging his son and Astrid to speed it up. "Let's move it! Let's get off this forsaken island!"

26. Chapter 26

Chapter 25: New Friends

The Volcanic eruption was a spectacular sight to behold from a distance. All the ships and dragons were far enough away when the mountain blew and the ash cloud spread across the island. All the Vikings watch the spectacular sight, safely away from the island. Most of the Vikings that were flying on the backs of dragons only managed to stay and watch for a few minutes before they headed off for Berk. They didn't want to wear out the dragons before taking the flight home.

Ruffnut, Tuffnut, Fishlegs and Snotlout all were among the Vikings flying on ahead home, having no room for all of their dragons on the boats. The only dragons that was on the boat, for obvious reasons, was Toothless and Stormfly. Hiccup, Astrid, and Bitwolf were all on the leading ship, more than enjoying their relaxation after their ordeal on the island.

Stoick could relate; all he wanted to do now was go home and sleep. Unfortunately, his only rest was going to come during this voyage home; the moment he stepped foot in Berk, the chaos of trying to find food and shelter for his tribe was going to keep him busy for a very long time.

"Stoick, what are we gonna do with these Outcast Vikings?" Spitelout asked.

"All of Alvin's men have run off. These Vikings were victims of his schemes. They're free to live with us and join our tribe if they so chose."

Astrid overheard the conversation and it got her thinking. She walked to Stormfly, who was talking with Lanell. "How about you, Stormfly? Why don't you come live with us in Berk. It's a great place to live!"

The scales of the Mood Dragon changed colors to a light green. Astid had no idea what mood that color represented, but she knew it wasn't her excited, happy colors. "I can't," The dragon said mournfully. "This is my home. I can't leave. I have to back."

"But the island's on fire!" Astrid replied, sad to hear that she did

not want to come back to Berk with them. After everything that had happened, she thought the two of them worked very well together. "In Berk, you'd be surrounded by friends."

The mood dragon could not look her in the eyes; she looked to the said to avoid her gaze. "I can't. I have to go."

"If you're taking off, then perhaps you'll be kind enough to give me a lift," the old woman asked, placing a hand on Stormfly's neck.

The dragon agreed, albeit hesitantly. Stoick walked up to Lanel, wanting to bid her farewell, but also extend an invitation to her. He didn't want her to go out of the feeling that she wasn't welcomed to Berk. "You can come live with us, in Berk, if you want. It's the least we can do after everything you've done for us."

"Oh, you don't need another old woman to worry about, though I will come for a visit. Right now, though, I have some important errands to attend to."

Stormfly knelt down to aid the elderly woman's attempt to climb onto her back. It was a little challenging for her, but after a few stumbles, she finally made it up. "Well, so long, everyone. I hope you have a safe journey home."

Everyone on board this ship waved farewell as they watched Stormfly take to the sky. As the two of them flew off, Hiccup's attention was more on Astrid. He could sense her heart breaking as she watched them fly away. He couldn't help but wonder about what the two of them were talking about before Astrid asked Stormfly to stay. At first, he paid it no mind; but now, after watching them fly off, he couldn't help but suspect that this departure was planned.

* * *

><p>A week had passed since the eruption; now the island began its process of healing. Three quarters of the entire island has been scorched, and about a quarter of that was blankets in hardened lava. The dark clouds had departed, and sunlight was once again allowed to shine down on the island to act like medicine for the sick. Already, some of the scorched trees showed signs of life with little sprouts of green here and there. No, the island wasn't dead by any sense of the word; this was merely the circle of life.<p>

A shadow walked through the fragile forest. He walked with taste of defeat and incompleteness, with a tinge of defiance and determination. This defeat had been a costly one; it cost him his right hand...literately. The loss of his village, his Vikings, and his dragons were nothing to him, but the loss of his limb was an unacceptable loss; it was a loss that demanded retribution.

After everything he had gone through, Alvin should have been glad that was all he had lost. Being gobbled up by a dragon was not pleasant in the least. He should not have survived, and a part of him wishes he hadn't. The whole experience would forever haunt his dreams. He had waited for death to take him, but the blasted dragon had other intentions in mind.

Haven been freed from his spell, the Furious was more soft hearted than he originally believed. Whether it knew what he had to it or

not, it saved him from being burnt up by the lava by holding him in his mouth. The moment it found land that would be safe from the eruption, it released him. He should have known that the dragon's gentle nature would cause him problems.

So now, he was a Viking chief without a tribe and a village. How could things possibly get worse?

Fate was determined to prove him wrong, yet again, as multi-colored vortex swirled around him like a small funnel. A pain seared through his whole body as it began to shrink. His whole body began to change. In a magical blink of an eye, he had gone from a husky, muscular Viking man to a scrawny, Viking teenager. This could mean only one thing... his mother had reversed her spell over him; she was abandoning him and his quest.

His first reaction was that of anger, but it didn't take long for that to change. There was a hidden advantage to this. Yes, returning to his natural form, this could be just what he needed to be able to get revenge on Hiccup the Horrendous. Yes, this would do quite nicely, in fact.

* * *

><p>Berk was on a slow road to recovery. Construction of the village was well on the way, with several of the buildings nearing completion. The food level was so low, however, that it would not be long until starvation started settling in. The good news was that Ivar the Fearsome had gotten word of Berk's needs, and was on their way to the island, right now, with large amount of food, building materials, and Vikings to help the rebuilding process.<p>

The mood in Berk had greatly improved... for the most part, that was. Since returning to Berk, Astrid had not been her normal self. She had been uncharacteristically down and depressed. Even when Snotlout was being annoying, she wouldn't even raise up a fist. She had become more reclusive than Hiccup had ever seen her; she didn't like hanging out with the gang at all. She spent more time cooped up in her room than anything else. The only reason she was out and about now, was that Stoick had ordered her out.

When Hiccup found her, she was sitting on a giant stone, near the ledge of the mountain, throwing tiny rocks. Hiccup dodged through the hustle and bustle of busy-at-work Vikings to join her. As he arrived, she knew he was there, but she didn't bother looking up. Not knowing what to say or how to start a conversation with her, as of late, he decide just to throw out a useless fact. "Ivar the Fearsome should be here shortly. We'll finally be able to have a decent meal for once."

"Great," she replied with a lack of enthusiasm. She had no interest in hearing good news, or any news for that matter. She was determined to continue to sulk. She had always been the most stubborn young Viking Hiccup had ever known.

Risking in evoking her wrath, he gave one last try to console her. "Listen, it may take some time, but things will return to normal."

"Yea, normal," Astrid muttered as she threw another stone out towards

the ocean. She was not going to be cheered up for anything; at least, that's what she thought.

Before Hiccup had the chance to try something else to cheer her up, a familiar voice awoken Astrid from the dark cloud that hung over her head. "Caaaaamiiiiicaaaaaziiiiii!"

"Stormfly?" Astrid jumped to her feet and spun around to see Stormfly landing in the heart of the village. Riding on her back, the old woman that they met in the Outcast Lands, Lanell, waved an enthused greeting to all the Vikings. All the Vikings in the village started to gather around their unexpected visitors; the young Vikings were there quicker than the adults. Astrid ran straight for Stormfly, excited to see the dragon again. As everyone surrounded the visitors, Hiccup took the opportunity to sneak off.

Astrid's gloomy mood had instantly vanished as she greeted the Mood dragon by rubbing her chin. "Stormfly, you came!"

"I couldn't stay away from my Camicazi!" the dragon replied.

"There was a good reason why she couldn't come to Berk with you," Lanell commented. "It appears that when my sister put the spell on her, giving her the ability to speak, there was a limitation on the spell. She would have lost her ability to speak if she left the island."

"Uh, but she's speaking now, ain't she?" Snotlout pointed out, partially to show off for Gertrude, the young Viking girl he had taken a liken too.

"It took a bit longer than I had hoped, but I was able to reverse that limitation. Stormfly now has the permanent ability to speak," the old woman replied.

"Does this mean that you're staying!" Astrid felt her hopes rise.

The Mood didn't have lips, but if she did, Astrid would have sworn that the dragon was smiling. "Where Camicazi goes, I will go." Overflowing with joy, Astrid couldn't contain herself, and she hugged Stormfly's neck.

Stoick pushed his way through the crowd to greet Lanell to Berk. "Welcome to our home. The offer still stands if you want to stay."

"I appreciate the offer, but I'm just visiting. I'm here to report that Ivar the Fearsome and his tribe will be arriving any moment."

Upon the mention of Ivar, Astrid turned and looked for Hiccup who had mysteriously disappeared. "Where'd Hiccup go?"

"Over hear!" his raspy voice called out from somewhere amongst the sea of giant Vikings. It took a few seconds, but the young Viking managed to wither through the massive group of bodies like a snake slithering through a pile of rocks. "I had a feeling that we hadn't seen the last of Stormfly, so I took the liberty and made you this."

Hiccup held up a large, brown, leather saddle, similar to the one he had on Toothless. Astrid lit up at the gift. "A saddle! You made me a... wait a minute! You knew Stormfly was going to come to Berk?"

"When I saw the way Stormfly took off, I had a strong feeling that she wanted to come to Berk with you. I guessed that she had some unresolved issues to take care of, and so I made you this saddle for whenever she did show up."

Astrid smiled as she walked over to Hiccup to accept his gift. She gave him a gift of his own, a soft, gentle kiss which drew a round of snickering and 'Aww's'. "That's the for the saddle." The next part of her gift to him involved a hard jab to his shoulder. "And that's for everything else!" Everyone laughed as Hiccup rubbed his sore elbow, but managed a grin of his own.

Ruffnut and Tuffnut were there and present for everything. Both of them were glad to see Stormfly coming to make her new home at Berk. "It's time to celebrate! We all have dragons again!"

Ruffnut gave her twin brother a hard jab in the shoulder. When he gave her that '_What did I do?' _look, she used her head to point towards Bitwolf. "Oh," he grunted, realizing his insensitive mistake.

A dark shadow flew overhead, causing a panic to surge through the gathered Vikings. The situation was so eerily similar, they all knew what was happening. "The Timberjack is back!" Spitelout shouted out an alarm.

"Quick, everyone grab your weapons!" Gobber cried out, stretching out his hammer prosthesis up in the air.

"No wait!" Lanell urged. "The dragon has not come here to cause trouble."

The old woman had earned the respect of this entire tribe... enough so as to trust her judgment and halt any hostile moves that might provoke the large dragon. The Timberjack hovered over the Vikings, causing all of them to spread out. When they had spread out far enough, the dragon landed.

All the Vikings were itching to attack the dragon, after what it had done to their village. When the dragon looked at them with its menacing eyes, that urge nearly became overwhelming. It quickly came apparent that it was looking for someone or something, but what?

The dragon used his nose to sniff the around. He followed the scent in awkward, uncoordinated patterns. Every time it came too close to a Viking, the Viking would back away. His search finally brought him to Bitwolf, and after a quick sniff, he tilted his head and moaned.

"Isn't this one of Alvin's dragons?" Stoick asked. "Did you manage to free this dragon as well?"

"I didn't have to." Lanell turned to look at Bitwolf. "It was your act of kindness on the Island that has earned you his loyalty and

respect. Congratulations, young man, you have yourself a dragon."

Bitwolf couldn't believe it; at long last, he had a dragon of his own. He scratched the Timberjack underneath his lower jaw. The dragon stretched out his neck to give him easy access. The scratching felt so good, that the dragon closed its eyes and gurgled in delight.

"What are we waiting for?" Snotlout shouted. "Let's fly!"

It didn't take long for the young Vikings to prepare. Astrid mounted Stormfly with the new saddle, and climbed on top. The young Vikings found their dragons and climbed on their backs. Within a minute, they were soaring high above Berk in a straight-line formation. As they came to the ocean, they descended slightly.

It wasn't taking Bitwolf and the Timberjack very long at all to learn to work together. It was as if they had been together for months. They were able to keep in formation, and all the other dragons took to instantly trusting this new dragon. They welcomed the larger dragon to their little circle, and showed complete trust for one another.

As they flew over the rough waters of the ocean, they saw Ivar's five ships approaching Berk's docking bay. The legendary Viking chief looked up and waved at the young Vikings in the sky. Hiccup, the leader of their group, and the future Viking chief of Berk waved back in response. Things were looking up for them, and as long as they had their dragons by their sides, Hiccup knew that they would be able to weather any storm that was thrown their way.

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